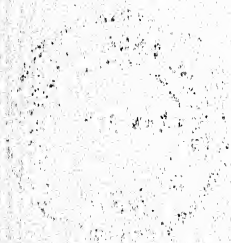


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THE MUSEUM IN AMERICA  
A CRITICAL STUDY

CRITIK. An examiner.

*Johnson's Dictionary*





# THE MUSEUM IN AMERICA

A CRITICAL STUDY BY  
LAURENCE VAIL COLEMAN  
DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN  
ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

*In Three Volumes Volume One*

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## FOREWORD

THESE volumes record an effort to see museums as a whole—the institution in different patterns, the work it does, the people who give it life—all in the matrix of society. The book is not a manual, but a commentary on the condition, the strengths and weaknesses, and the limitations and opportunities of museums.

In sketching familiar conditions, I have gone beyond recounting briefly what everybody knows by saying what I think about what everybody knows. Many of these opinions look ahead; but, in thus suggesting, I have tried to keep my feet on the ground by speaking only of changes already under way. If one launches out beyond observation and declares that there is no reason why this or that should not be so, one may be deceived. There is always a reason why the existing situation is what it is; and as soon as there is sufficient reason for a change, the change sets in. To accept this faith is to forego tempting flights of fancy and the wicked joy of many a condemnation.

Parts One and Two hew close to the line in locating, counting, measuring, and describing the museums of the country; some of these chapters might have been woefully statistical if I had given free rein to the many work-sheets of figures that led up to them. Small museums are conspicuous in this part of the story because of their number. Part Three—on museum work—allows some latitude to the reporter, and here the larger institutions get most attention because they are more active. The appendices, constituting a record for the end of 1938, contain classified lists such as have never before appeared, and statistics that are the fruit of long and persistent inquiry.

Aquariums, zoos, and botanical gardens—regarded as museums of special types—are not included in this study because they have so many problems strictly their own.

These volumes spring from recent extensive travels that took me to every part of the country, to all the museums I could reach—2,000 of them at least. The work is my own, and nobody else is responsible. But many friends and colleagues have given generously of counsel—so many of them, in fact, that I am at loss as to making acknowledgment. The whole manuscript was read by my colleague Mr. L. C. Everard, whose comments have brought about many changes in the text. I thank him again. And I am grateful also for the hospitality of the MacDowell Colony at Peterborough, New Hampshire, where much of the writing was done.

To the Carnegie Corporation of New York and to its President, Dr. Frederick P. Keppel, I am deeply indebted—myself, and on behalf of the American Association of Museums—for support that has made possible this study and its publication.

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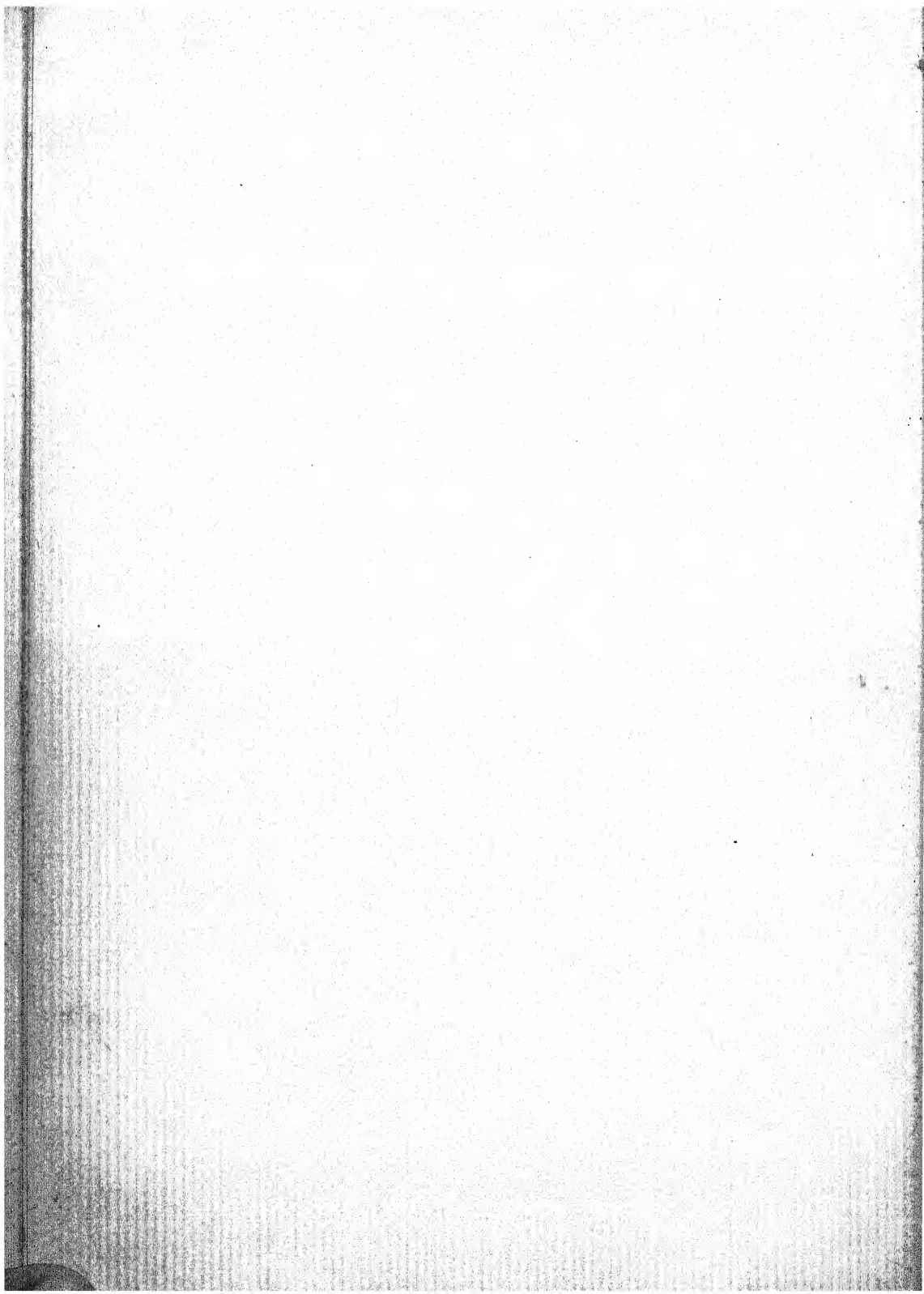
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THE MUSEUM SCENE

*PART ONE*



## A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

### CHAPTER I

TO REPORT on the growth of institutions is to record something of social change. This, on the face of it, is a hopeful task as the social order seems in the long run to improve. It seems so, that is, to some. If to others its twistings and turnings give no great elation, still one can report on them with good cheer; for there is a certain relief in change itself—"As I have often found in travelling in a stage-coach," said Washington Irving, prefacing his *Tales of a Traveller*, "that it is often a comfort to shift one's position, and be bruised in a new place."

**W**HAT NEXT among museums? Do the varied and swift developments of recent decades throughout this field indicate that a new order is in the making, or will museums fail to consolidate their gains and so miss far greater achievement? Some clue to the future should be found by observing what has happened.

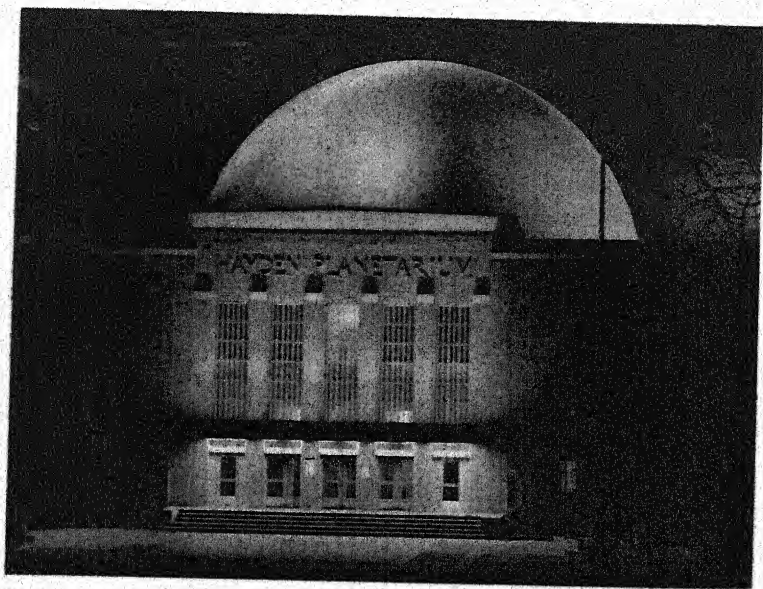
The most evident change of recent years is physical growth—increase in size and number of museums. The last quarter-century has seen the number go up from 600 museums recorded in 1910 to about 2,500 now. During this time the investment in buildings has grown from \$36,000,000 to \$180,000,000; and aggregate operating income, from somewhere in the neighborhood of \$2,000,000 a year to more than \$18,000,000. Thus 1938 displayed the all-time high record of support. Public museums have

gained a recognized place in communities. Many cities that had no museums at all a quarter-century ago are known the world over now for flourishing institutions. In leading cities constellations of museums have developed, with different types adjusted to each other. In hundreds of smaller places little museums have appeared. State museums have about doubled in number during the quarter-century, and progressive institutions among them have become statewide leaders in museum work. State governments and the federal government have also entered directly into museum work as guardians of scientific and historic sites. Historic house museums have multiplied from only a score to more than 640 with the rapid rise of the automobile; and trailside museums, also aided by the growth of motoring, have increased from the first one in 1921, to a total of 72. Children's museums, school museums, and school-system museums have developed. College and university museums, multiplying rapidly, have gained an essential place in higher education.

While this has been going on, extensive changes have come in the ways of museums. A quarter-century ago the educational ideal had very little to back it up in actuality, but now the volume of museum educational work is very great. Decades of trial and discussion have brought out practical methods, and of late critical study has defined the most pressing needs for further effort with both young and old. Improved display has made a visible transformation in museums, attended by the adoption of period settings in art and history, of habitat groups in science, and of action exhibits in industry museums.

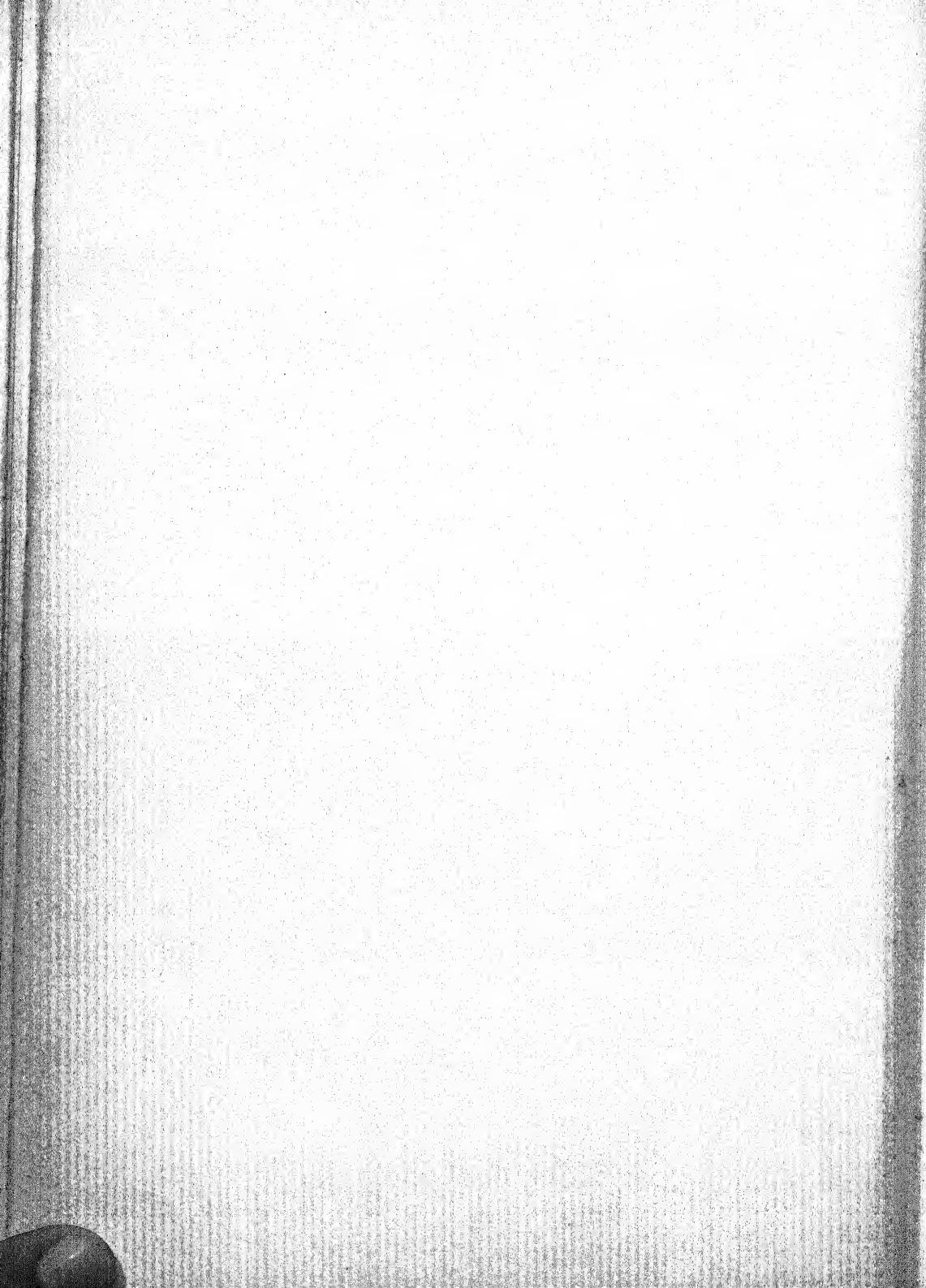
Meanwhile the growth of collections in size, range, and importance has given distinction to many museums. Collecting has passed out of the omnigathering stage and has linked itself to research—an unction to those who





*Courtesy of American Museum of Natural History*  
MUSEUM PERFORMING AT NIGHT

NEW YORK





lament the passing of great private collections. The research function itself has developed under modern objectives, and has spread from science and history to art. Museum people have enlarged their ranks as the work has grown, and through education and training they have begun to build a profession.

As if to further these gains, some tough old museum problems seem now to be stepping aside, no longer needing solution. The search for more practical ways of using natural light has become rather casual—as though in recognition of the likelihood that museums will soon be used intensively by night and that daylight will be of only part-time assistance to them. The late outcry about traditional sins of architects has been tempered, perhaps by the realization that the uses of buildings are setting demands that have power to bring about whatever changes they need. The struggle with troubles of labeling has been relaxed in the face of discovery that common defects of sight and usual habits of action call for different presentations of reading matter in exhibits. In many such ways the scene has been cleared for action.

Having embodied their early desires in collections and buildings, and realized their later aspirations by finding educational work to do and learning how to do it, museums are ready for an expansion of their usefulness. Museum people are uneasy over lingering doubts about principles, and impatient of deficiencies due to holding back by conservative elements. Responding to the need for more extensive work with children, directly and through schools, they are simplifying methods and reaching wider circles. In step with the growth of popular ideas reflected in the cry for adult education, museums are turning attention now to all the people. Clearly they are ready to put their long preparations to work on a larger scale than ever. For this the museum movement

is as well organized, in form and direction, as other like movements have been when they have made an end of growing up and have entered on their business in the world.

But more money is needed; this is the crucial problem. There are hard-pressed directors and trustees who see little chance of financing what they know is needed and museums are ready for. In fact, some observers say that any sanguine hopes do but overlook most ominous changes that have come over things of late. Private benefaction has felt blows that knock props from under establishments wanting gifts. The governments of cities, states, and nation have left old ways of stewardship behind, and adopted new ways that to these observers suggest the end of the rope. But such things are of the moment. Support of sound institutions does not disappear, let its channels shift as they may. Museums are deep-rooted in sentiment and objective reality, and have shown from the start that they are destined to endure and to grow.

It has happened, time and again in the course of history, that museums have made their best progress when foundations of things have been shaken. Now, in our greatly troubled times, they have a very good chance to reach new heights of achievement that financial dispositions of the future will find the ways to support.

Preparations for this have been long.

**T**HE BEGINNINGS were made early. Never was there a day when there was not a museum in the United States of America. In 1773—three years before the state house bell in Philadelphia became the Liberty Bell—the Library Society of Charles-Town, “taking into

their Consideration the many Advantages and great Credit that would result," had set out to collect materials for a full and accurate natural history of the province of South Carolina, and had fitted up a public museum—the first in this hemisphere, thriving now as the Charleston Museum. Before that, Harvard College had been collecting curiosities from at least as far back as the year 1750. In the 'sixties its Repository of Curiosities was burned, but soon a new Musaeum room was set aside for the rudiments of collections that after a century would lead to the University Museum at Cambridge.

In the early years of independence, Philadelphians knew the American Museum of Du Simitière on Arch Street, and collections of Charles Willson Peale displayed in additions to his home, while New Yorkers lent part of their old city hall to the Tammany Society for its museum of history and art. But these efforts were ephemeral.

Then, in 1793, something of world importance took place in Europe. France threw open the Palace of the Louvre as the Museum of the Republic, and so announced dramatically that a new museum age was just beginning. To be sure, Spain had opened her National Museum of Natural Sciences to the people seventeen years before, when ears had not been attuned; and England had been running the British Museum as a stately peep show for forty years. Neither of these beginnings had given the world a thrill, but that act of France was a resounding stroke.

At that time Europe had only a few museums, as distinguished from private and princely collections. England had five—Oxford's Ashmolean from 1683, the Museum of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society in Lincolnshire from 1710, Woodward's fossil collection at Cambridge from 1728, the British Museum from 1753, and the then new Museum of the Corporation of Ipswich. The Con-

continent had some very old collections destined later to bring forth public institutions. The gatherings of Cosmo de Medici in Florence and of the Elector Augustus in Dresden, like those of the kings of France at the Louvre, dated from the middle 1500's. So did a great many private collections of coins and miscellany, and some of the cabinets in the tradition born of Conrad Gesner's passion for natural history. In the 1740's the Vatican had formally established its Museum, and in the 1760's Cardinal Albani had arranged for his new Roman villa to be given over to Winckelmann's classical sculptures. Of these things Americans could learn best, in the late 1700's, from such friends as they had left in England; for English people were still going on the grand tour. And if they could have discerned then they would have realized, as we do now, that both the Old World and the New were creating a new kind of institution—the museum for the people.

In America these novel institutions were being made by societies (Appendix X). In 1791, two years before the opening of the Louvre, the Massachusetts Historical Society—more a library than a museum—was organized. In 1797 came the East India Marine Society at Salem; in 1804, the New York Historical Society; in 1805, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts; in 1812, the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, and the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester; in 1822, the Maryland Academy of Sciences at Baltimore; and in 1823, the Albany Lycaenum that soon became part of the Albany Institute. From 1820 to 1823, when the oldest parts of New England celebrated hundredth anniversaries, five historical societies were started—the Pilgrim Society of Plymouth, the Essex Historical Society at Salem, and the societies of Maine, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. All of them are going now. The East India Society's

museum is the Peabody Museum of Salem; the Essex Historical Society is the Essex Institute; and the others have names unchanged. Contemporary with this group, by the way, stands Latin America's oldest museum—that of the Royal School (now the Brazilian National School) of Fine Arts in Rio de Janeiro, to which, for its founding in 1815, King João gave his paintings brought from Portugal.

There were also some ill-fated institutions started at the turn of the century. The American Academy of Fine Arts began in 1802 with much stir, only to be knocked about from pillar to post in New York until its surviving property was sold for debt in 1841. Peale, having found the annex to his Philadelphia home inadequate, secured the use of Philosophical Hall in 1794, and then of the upstairs floor of Independence Hall itself in 1802; but his Philadelphia Museum was sold out when he died in the 'twenties. Son Rembrandt Peale started a museum of his own at Baltimore in 1814, but it lasted only sixteen years. John Scudder established his American Museum in New York in 1810, having bought the Tammany Society collection. He shared a city building with the Academy of Fine Arts and the Historical Society for a time, but Barnum took him over in the end. Boston's Linnaean Society started a museum in 1814, but gave its collection to Harvard within a decade. In 1816 there appeared at Washington the Columbian Institute, harbinger of the National Museum. And in 1817 came New York's Lycaem of Natural History—getting ready for the fire that later wiped away its whole collection.

Several colleges were forming museums during the early 1800's. William Dandridge Peck was building Harvard's collections in zoology. Yale's cabinet, forerunner of her Peabody Museum of Natural History, grew from a collection of minerals begun in 1802. Caspar



Wistar founded his museum of anatomy at the University of Pennsylvania in 1808, and in time this became part of the Wistar and Horner Museum that is with the Wistar Institute now. Williams College started its geology collection in 1816. Art objects also had made their way to campuses but they were only such as the portraits that had hung on the walls of Harvard and of William and Mary for a century. James Bowdoin left a lot of pictures to Bowdoin College in 1811, and they were in the way for decades. The teaching of art in college was not yet.

**T**HE SECOND HALF-CENTURY for American museums began in 1823; and, as though to mark the occasion, work on the first public museum building was started. This was Pilgrim Hall of the Pilgrim Society at Plymouth, completed in 1824. The Charleston Museum still had makeshift quarters. Rembrandt Peale had put up his private museum and residence in Baltimore in 1814, but that building later endured a century of other uses before becoming the home of a public museum. A hall that Jacob Gilliams built for Philadelphia's Academy in 1815 was only a temporary structure on a lot behind his father's Arch Street home. And a spacious brick shed that formed part of William Clark's home of 1818 in St. Louis was for his private Indian Museum, later sold. So the building still standing at Plymouth was truly the first for a public museum. (Incidentally the only other earlier structure was Yale's Cabinet Building, 1819, which was a dining hall with space above for science exhibits, and was not even named for the cabinet until commons had given it up.)

Museum building started in a revived architectural

style. Architect Alexander Parris designed Pilgrim Hall as a Greek temple—which was natural, as the Greek revival was just getting under way in the 1820's. The original wooden portico with Doric columns has since been replaced by a granite Roman Doric portico, but otherwise the original building is intact.

It was during the same decade that Europe turned to putting up great museum buildings. In 1828 the Altes Museum in Berlin and the oldest wing of the British Museum, monumental products of the classical revival, were finished; and in the decade following appeared half a dozen other important buildings, notably the Glyptothek and the old Pinacothek in Munich and the National Gallery in London. This was Europe's first real burst of museum construction. Only a few buildings, including the world's oldest of 1683 at Oxford and Italy's oldest of 1786 at Vatican City, had come before.

During this time of Europe's exuberance America built her first college art museum—the Trumbull Gallery of 1832 at Yale. Shortly before that two public art buildings had appeared, but neither was strictly an art museum. These were the gallery building of 1826 belonging to the Boston Athenaeum, a library, and the building of 1831 on Barclay Street, New York, for the American Academy of Fine Arts (the academy that debt swallowed a decade later). All three have vanished, but the Trumbull Gallery lives on through Yale's Gallery of Fine Arts where the paintings that Trumbull helped to hang in 1832 are still to be seen.

The next important buildings—the Wadsworth Athenaeum's Gothic castle of 1844 and the Smithsonian Institution's Romanesque castle of 1855—were not intended for museum purposes alone, and now both are put to library and administrative uses. Renwick, who designed the Smithsonian building, was architect also for the old



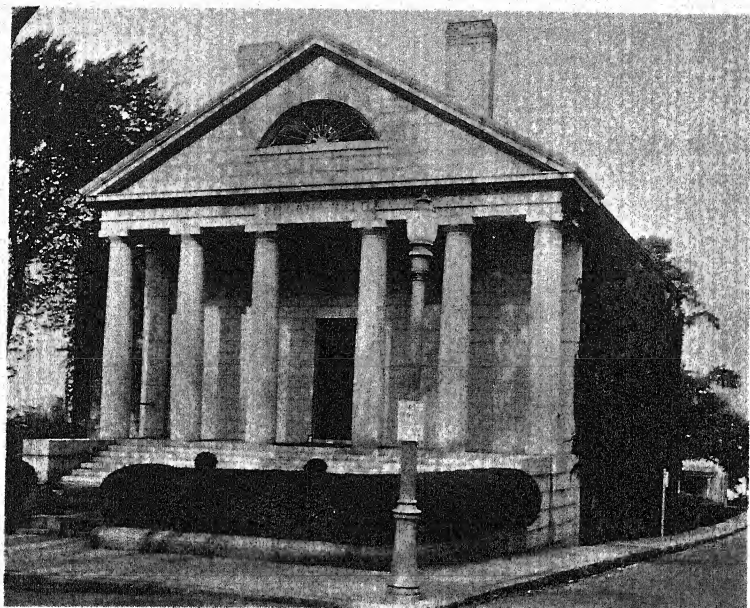
Corcoran Gallery completed in 1859. Commandeered by the government for the Quarter-master General during the Civil War, the Corcoran building missed its intended use for fifteen years. Meanwhile, in 1865, New York's old National Academy of Design was built. This ended the first period of construction. Memorial Hall, put up for the Exposition of 1876 and reopened as a museum in 1877, belongs to the era following the Centennial.

Museums multiplied actively during the half-century from Pilgrim Hall to the eve of the Centennial (1823-1873).

*In the field of history* some 50 societies were founded—coming intermittently for the first half of the time, but by two's or three's in not a few years after that, even during the Civil War. State historical societies, of which there were only four earlier than 1823, were set up in twenty states. During the 1850's local historical societies began to be formed in numbers. Also the first two county societies appeared; these came in New England—whence the county idea has since departed, having found better social soil in states bordering the Great Lakes. Many of these new societies were libraries more than museums at the start, and some of them have remained so to this day.

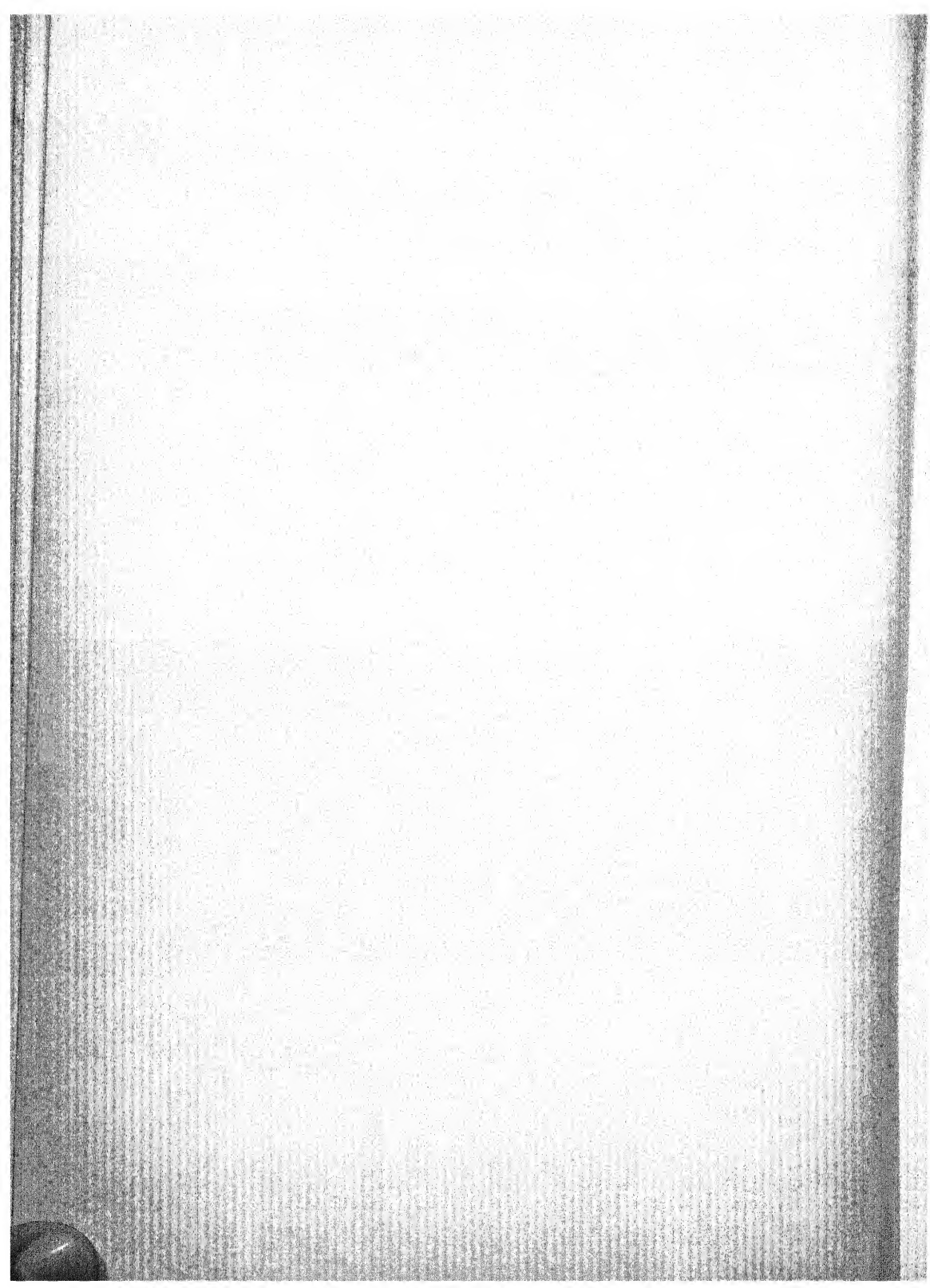
In 1850 Washington's Headquarters at Newburgh was made into the first historic house museum. However, this type could not much increase until the automobile had arrived and become common.

*In the science field* there were some important developments between 1823 and 1873. There was Englishman Smithson's bequest of an endowment to the United States in 1826 that paved the way for the National Museum. State governments appeared on the museum scene with geological survey collections that gravitated to museums. Massachusetts began the first survey in



*Courtesy of Pilgrim Society*  
FIRST PUBLIC MUSEUM BUILDING

PLYMOUTH, MASS.



1830 and gave her material to Amherst. Connecticut followed in 1835 and gave hers to Yale. Michigan started in 1837 and at once established a Cabinet at the state university. And, in 1843, after seven years of natural history survey, New York established the State Cabinet of Natural History that became the New York State Museum. Many of these surveys embraced botany and zoology as well as sciences of the earth; and most were fruitful of collections and stimulating to the increase of museums for the rest of the nineteenth century.

Natural history societies—sometimes called academies, sometimes lycaeums—were also being organized. The earlier steps of Philadelphia (1812) and Baltimore (1822) were now followed successfully by Worcester (1829), Boston (1830), Portland in Maine (1843), San Francisco (1853), Grand Rapids (1854), Milwaukee (1855), Chicago (1857), Springfield in Massachusetts (1859), Buffalo (1861), Davenport (1867), Cincinnati (1870), and San Diego (1874). It was toward the end of this period that the old East India Marine Society, instituted at Salem to fathom and record the ocean's lore, became the Peabody Academy of Science. In 1869, New York founded its American Museum of Natural History on a new institutional pattern that, during years to come, would be used widely by new museums and by some of the older organizations changing form to keep up with the times.

Cabinets of natural history in colleges also multiplied. To the short roster of earlier collections nearly a score were added (including the Appleton Cabinet at Amherst—its building, 1846, the first for a college science museum) before Harvard bought Louis Agassiz's collection in 1852, paving the way for the Museum of Comparative Zoology. These cabinets were mostly of geology but a few were of plants and animals, and at least the one at Ann Arbor already had a comprehensive collection. Student natural



history societies worked for some of them from the 'twenties to the 'fifties; Amherst had an early society dating from 1825; and the one at Williams College, probably the strongest, ran from 1835 to 1860. By that time Darwin's influence was beginning to be felt, but there was still a decade of museum founding in the old spirit before the new interest directed energies toward laboratory work in biology. During the 'sixties two dozen museums were started on campuses—including those of Iowa, Vermont, Rochester, Kansas, Harvard, and Yale. The last two, from benefactions of George Peabody, marked the beginnings of endowment for museums.

*In the field of art*, during this same half century from 1823 to 1873, there was little, except toward the last, to foreshadow the great developments that would come in succeeding years. Only the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts lived over from the earlier period to endure. In 1826 New York started a successful art school, the National Academy of Design, that held annual exhibitions and later made a point of asking children to them. Also in 1826 the Boston Athenaeum commenced holding exhibitions in its gallery, just completed, behind the Perkins Mansion in which its library was housed then. The Wadsworth Atheneum had a picture gallery in its new Gothic building of 1842; and in the next decade the Brooklyn Institute began exhibiting and got a bequest of \$5,000 for purposes that included a gallery of fine arts. Yale had opened its Trumbull Gallery in 1832; and by the 'fifties there were some other developments on campuses—as when the University of Michigan bought casts of sculpture, Harvard accepted the Gray collection of engravings, and Yale held temporary shows.

But the most significant thing that had happened in art up to this time was the start of private collecting. Luman Reed made friends of artists and was buying

pictures for the top-floor gallery in his New York home in the 1830's; after his death his collection became the New York Gallery of Fine Arts for more than a decade until the New York Historical Society took it over in 1858. In the meantime, Thomas J. Bryan had brought a collection of old masters from Europe in 1853, and this formed the Bryan Gallery of Christian Art until it too was acquired by the historical society. In 1860 James Jackson Jarves brought home his famous synoptic collection of Italian paintings dating from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, and he spent more than a decade trying to find it a permanent home. This was the best thing of the kind America had yet seen, but New York and Boston turned it down before it went to Yale. These were but a few of the beginnings. "It has become the mode to have a taste," said Jarves in 1864. "Private galleries in New York are becoming almost as common as private stables." The idea of paying much for a picture was new, but it soon took hold and Wier's *Gun Foundry* set an early high by fetching five thousand dollars in the Academy exhibition of 1866. Interest spread to other cities. W. T. Walters of Baltimore and William Wilson Corcoran of Washington had begun buying before the 'sixties, and by the 'seventies T. B. Walker was at it in Minneapolis, and E. B. Crocker in Sacramento—making collections that later would become public museums. Rich men, hobbying at art, were preparing the way for the great museums to come. Private collections would long continue to be made and would flow into public collections; and wealth would flow also, by gift and bequest.

Public art museums seemed destined not to appear until 1870, since the few that came before had difficulties. Efforts at Charleston from 1858 and at Buffalo from 1862 were poorly rewarded for decades. Chicago's beginning in 1866 had a dozen bad years to start with. Washing-

ton's gallery, endowed by Corcoran in 1869 after the Union Army got through with it, was not opened until 1874. But in 1870 the first two great institutions, in the new administrative pattern that would be followed for art as for science, were established—one at New York and one at Boston.

A CENTENNIAL SURVEY of libraries—that dealt incidentally with museums—was made by John Eaton, Commissioner of Education, in 1876. (*Public Libraries in the United States of America*. Special Report, Washington.) If the right people had known that 1873, the year before Eaton began work on this report, was the hundredth anniversary of the country's oldest museum, there would doubtless have been a more attentive look at museums. But Eaton included two chapters—one on historical societies (recommending that they extend their sphere by embracing natural history and art), and another appealing for art museums (which "obviously" should be under library roof and should display copies of paintings and also plaster casts, \$28 and up).

If the condition of museums in 1876 could have been viewed with understanding, not to say prescience, a classic document might have been produced. The heyday of public museums had begun. The principal elements of the modern museum scene (except for some recent developments) had appeared. The National Museum had begun to grow; and its appropriation—\$4,000 for many years up to 1870—had been doubled and redoubled and more. There were four state museums by this time, and they had taken on the character that most state museums have kept ever since. College museums,



during fifty years, had increased in number to seventy-three for science and six for art. The first museum run by a school board had been started at Battle Creek in 1872. Local museums had multiplied from one to 125, and there were fair indications of much that would later come to pass among them. History museums had consistently increased in number faster than all other kinds together, as they have done ever since; art museums, of which there were only eleven, were clearly due for a boom; and natural history museums, of which there were eighteen, were already on the downhill side of a collecting enthusiasm and were plainly in for the troubles from which they are only now beginning to escape.

Also there was evidence, in 1876, of a change in form of museum organization. The old societies, academies, and lycaeums had begun to give place to institutions—conspicuous examples in Washington, Boston, and New York—suggesting that in the future the typical museum would be a corporation piloted by trustees. And to these harbingers had come city support—tax funds being given to the American and the Metropolitan museums in New York. Nothing just like this had happened before in this country. Some earlier city support at Philadelphia and Charleston had been but a pittance and had carried not much obligation in return; but here worldly responsibility was laid upon the new kind of museum to be “as important and beneficial an agent in the instruction of the people as any of the schools or colleges of the city.” It was at this time also, well in view of centennial reporters, that the aim of public service—as contrasted to club activity—began to be realized through educational exhibits and the earliest cooperation with schools.

There were some other indications of which the importance was necessarily obscured from critical eyes in 1876. These were the early historic house museums, and the

first state and national parks. Without the knowledge that a few years more would put nearly everyone on wheels, there was then no way to know that Washington's Headquarters at Newburgh, Mount Vernon on the Potomac, the Senate House at Kingston, and three or four other old houses that had been made into shrines, were the first few among hundreds that would be saved for the inspiration and education of tourists. Also, without that same foreknowledge, there was no way to guess that a couple of state parks and one national park in the West were of a kind destined to multiply and, with the aid of future park museums, to take a share of educational responsibility.

THE EXPANSION PERIOD of museums—the period of the present—is, roughly, since the Centennial or, picturesquely, since 1873 which was the hundredth year of museums or, strictly, since 1870 when the great museums of New York and Boston were started.

This period since the 'seventies has set the modern museum scene, bringing the number of museums to 2,480 (Appendix U), swelling the capital investment in museum buildings from about half a million dollars to more than 300 times that figure, or \$181,227,000 (Appendix W), raising the operating incomes of museums from an aggregate of only a few thousand dollars annually to something over \$18,000,000, and gathering to museums, through purchase and gift and bequest, collections that are beyond price. Already this country has perhaps a quarter—surely a fifth—of the world's museums, some comparing favorably with the great museums abroad.

These changes have been attended by an equally striking growth in museum work. Field activities have rami-

fied over the earth, and have given museums a position of eminence in exploration. Researches in natural science, and more recently in archaeology and art, have linked museum collections inseparably to scholarship. Exhibition has so extended itself in range and skill that it now attracts to museums fifty million visitors a year, and museum instruction has gained firm standing in the educational realm. From experience there has come a philosophy of museums, supported by a body of matter in print and accepted by a quasi-professional group numbering into thousands.

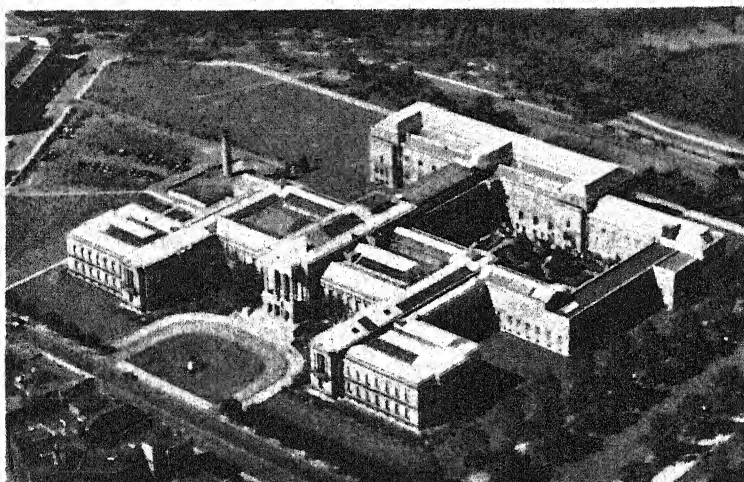
Museums have gone far, but they still have far to go. Nothing makes this plainer than to see actual museum conditions, region by region from coast to coast.

**G**EOGRAPHY OF MUSEUMS is a record of contrasts among institutions corresponding to differences between people in different parts of the country. New England, with many museums, is a region of maturity with some of the marks of age. The Middle West has a progressive museum development centering in efficient cities and sharing their confidence. Over the Great Open Spaces there is little, thinly spread; this is the land of the soil. Along the Pacific Coast are young and sturdy museums, and also impressive groups of museums at two big cities—showing that the people of seaports facing west are catching up with the people of ports facing east. In Arizona and New Mexico are museums that put their principal stress upon aboriginal life and archaeological sites lying outside their walls; here is an area that itself is a museum. In Texas and Oklahoma are new but strong institutions—part of the young prosperity sprung from rich natural resources. In the

Southeast there are many struggling museums reflecting the social and economic difficulties of the South; and also there are good museums, some of them arising from outside effort. At the Nation's Capital museums are unique, taking some of their traits from the government and some from the throng of tourist visitors. Finally, in New York the height of museum development is reached.

Let us look more closely.

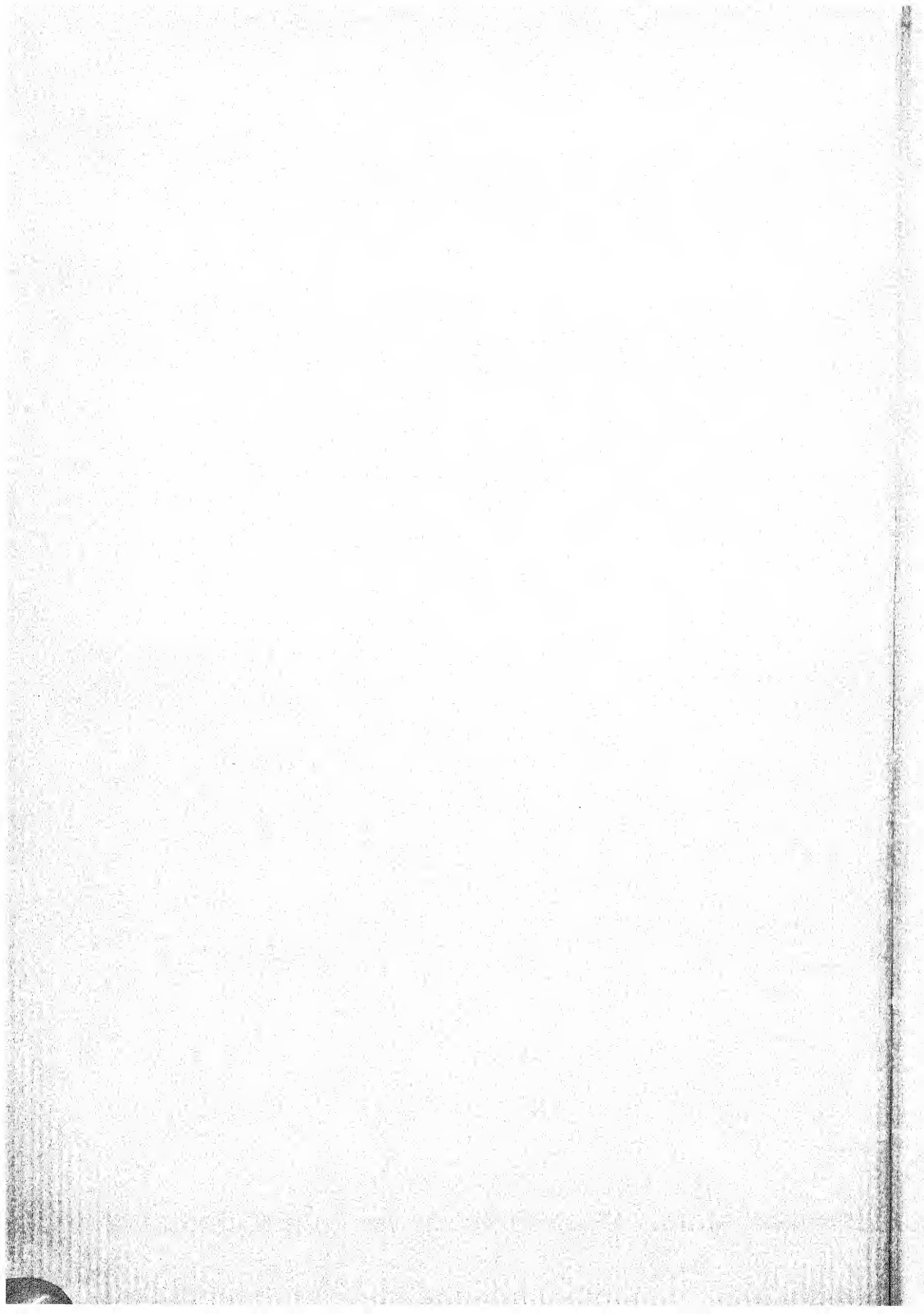
*New England*—or the southern part of it, unrivaled for number of museums—has, literally, clusters of museums at its large cities and chief university towns. The area around Massachusetts Bay is densely filled, and Connecticut and Rhode Island are also well developed—but not New Hampshire, Vermont, or Maine. Some of the institutions are venerable; but many are young, and a score have very new buildings. Eminent is Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. Important are university or college museums of art at Cambridge, New Haven, Northampton, Wellesley, and several other place, and school museums of art at Andover and Norwich; public art museums at Providence, Worcester, Springfield, Hartford, New London, and Manchester—also at Pittsfield where art and science are conjoined; and earnest little art museums like those of Fitchburg and Concord. There are great university museums of science at Yale and Harvard, and others at the University of Vermont and at Williams, Amherst, and Dartmouth; public science museums in a dozen cities doing not as well as art museums but some of them notable, as at Boston, Springfield, Salem, Providence, and St. Johnsbury; and children's museums—three in the Boston area, and two in Connecticut. There are historical societies in place after place—those of Portland, Concord in New Hampshire, Newport, and Salem standing out; historic house museums everywhere—more than a hundred in Massachusetts alone, including the Fair-



*Photo by E. E. Dawe, Wellesley*  
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

BOSTON





banks House, the country's oldest house, at Dedham, and part of the chain of houses belonging to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

*The Middle West* is bordered on its eastern side by a zone skirting the Appalachians in New York and Pennsylvania. This belt is less progressive than the regions on either flank, but it presents another feature, the strong state museums at Albany and Harrisburg. The only state museums in New England—those of Maine and Vermont—are unimportant, but New York and Pennsylvania have state institutions in a class with those of Ohio, Illinois, and several states beyond. In Albany and Harrisburg, also, there are agencies supporting historic house museums; New York has the longest experience of any state in this line, and examples of its work can be seen at Newburgh, Kingston, and many other places. In this zone of the Mohawk and Susquehanna are a few active public museums—at Reading and Syracuse most notably—and some college museums, of which the best are at Hamilton for science and at Vassar for art.

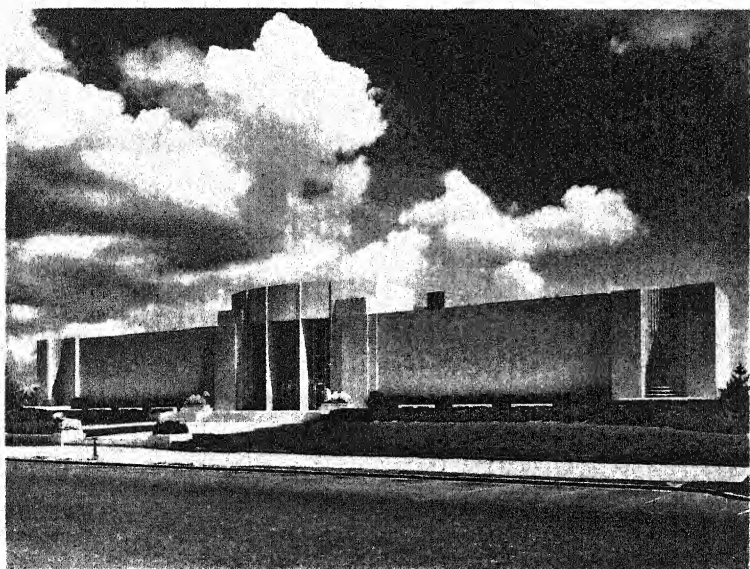
The true Middle West is not bounded altogether by state lines. Rochester and Pittsburgh like to be thought of as eastern cities, but with them in fact begins the land of the Great Lakes, bounded by the Ohio and the Mississippi. On the western side this area reaches over the River at the Twin Cities, and again at St. Louis where it puts out a finger along the Missouri to Omaha.

The museum cities of the Middle West show as nearly complete a pattern of strong public museums as can be found in any section of the country. There are modern museum buildings in the large cities, adapted buildings in most of the cities of middling size, and quarters in libraries or other public buildings of the smaller cities. Here are many well known museums like those of Rochester, Buffalo, and Pittsburgh in the east; of Minneapolis,

St. Paul, and Omaha in the west; of Milwaukee, Chicago, Toledo, Detroit, and Cleveland on the Great Lakes, and of Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Kansas City in the south. Among places of more than 100,000 inhabitants, only St. Paul, South Bend, and Gary have no public museum for art; and only Detroit, St. Louis, Kansas City, Indianapolis, and Omaha have none for science. Chicago has special museums besides its comprehensive museums of art, science, and history—which bear witness to advanced museum development. Here is an important industrial museum, one of the few of its kind.

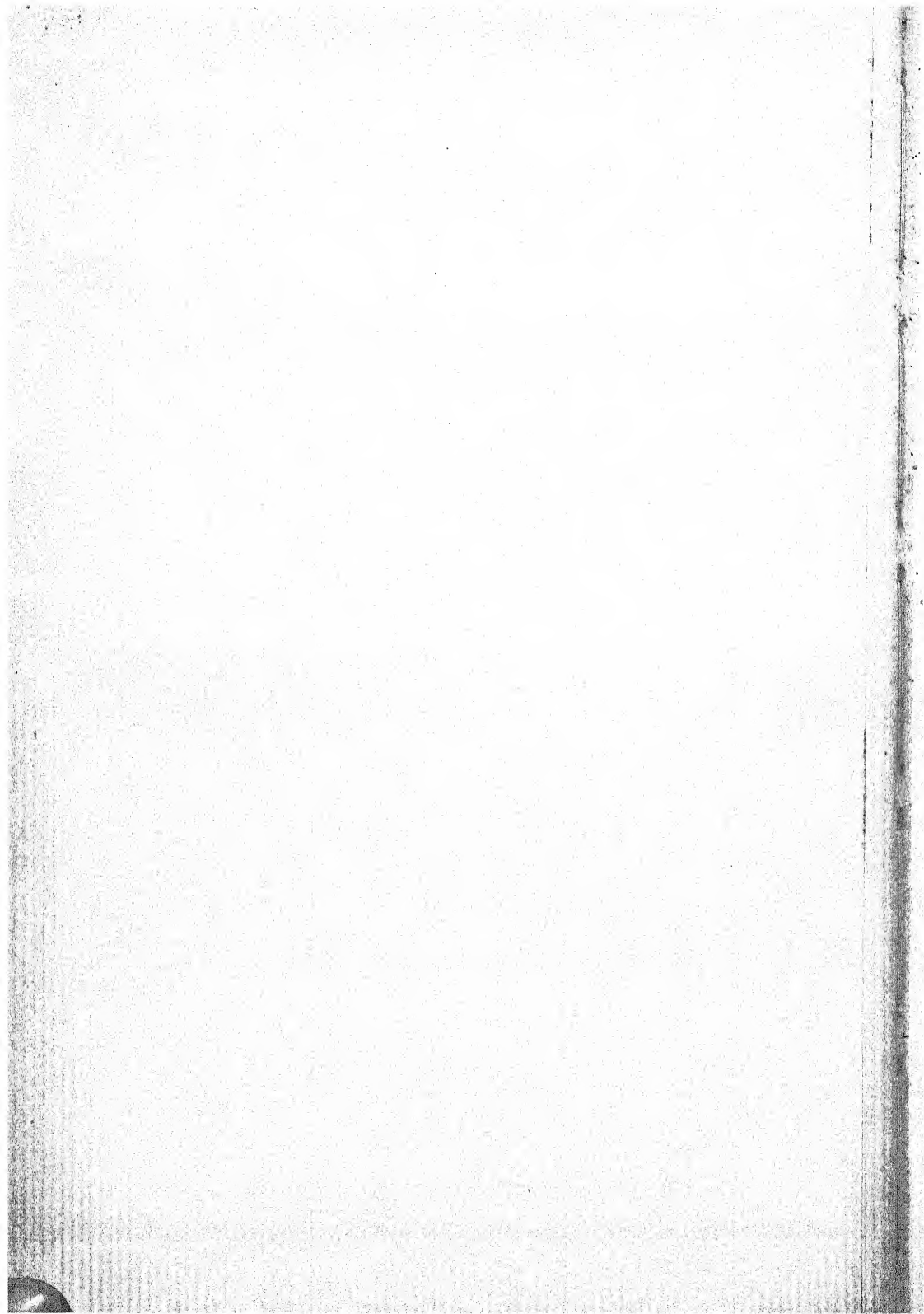
Good small museums are to be found all the way from Erie on the east to Fort Dodge on the west—notably also at Coshocton, Massillon, and Youngstown in Ohio; Fort Wayne, Lafayette, Richmond, and South Bend in Indiana; Decatur, Evanston, Jacksonville, Peoria, Rockford, and Springfield in Illinois; Battle Creek, Bloomfield Hills, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and Muskegon in Michigan; Green Bay, New London, and Oshkosh in Wisconsin; and Davenport in Iowa. The county historical society is a common feature of this area—especially in Indiana where the state's Historical Bureau has given help, and in Ohio where the State Museum is active. Several of the state governments have gone in for historic house museums. Ohio has good examples, as at Marietta and New Philadelphia. So has Indiana, as at Madison and Mitchell. Michigan has Fort Michillimackinac; and now Illinois is embarked on a program of reconstructing Lincoln's haunts for the tourist, as most notably in New Salem State Park near Petersburg. Throughout the area there are museums of this kind; Wisconsin has 16, Minnesota seven, Missouri seven.

Children's museums—nowhere common as separate organizations—are found, well established, in Detroit and Indianapolis, and starting up in several other localities.



SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

SEATTLE





The country's strongest school-*system* museums are those of St. Louis and Cleveland. There are important college museums at the state universities of Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. Michigan's University Museums at Ann Arbor, and Nebraska's State Museum on the campus at Lincoln, especially, are outstanding institutions. The University of Chicago, and Washburn, Oberlin, and Beloit colleges are also notable.

*The American hinterland*, from the ragged edge of the Middle West all the way to the Cascades and the Sierras, north of Texas and the Southwest, is a vast region of few institutions. Central Colorado has a museum oasis embracing Denver and Colorado Springs; but outside this spot there are no large museums, and only in Bismarck, Deadwood, Rapid City, Cody, Missoula, Spokane, Salt Lake City, and Fillmore are there small museums that have homes of their own. Eastern Kansas and Nebraska, to be sure, have good museums at Lawrence, Topeka, Wichita, and Lincoln; but these places are on the edge of the panhandle that extends up-river from St. Louis to Omaha, and is called "the East" by those who live beyond.

The people of the hinterland will not give much attention to museums in this generation. In the next they may, but now they are busy with the earth, battling its vagaries and gathering up what they can of its substance. The federal government is the Great Father to them, and the state governments are his prophets. It is not surprising therefore that states and the nation are responsible for most of such museum development as there is. State support of museums is not large, but most states show some measure of it through the state historical society—a body that starts with a room in the capitol and sooner or later may graduate to a building as at Bismarck, Denver, and, in the panhandle, at Topeka. The nation's

contribution is that of museums in national parks. There are five of these park museums in the Yellowstone, and others in Grand Teton, Rocky Mountain and Mesa Verde, Glacier, Bryce Canyon, and Zion National Parks. They are little museums of a new type, important beyond their size.

*The Pacific Coast* from Seattle to San Diego has a long straight string of up-to-date public and college museums, and also museums out of the coastal line at Sacramento, Stockton, and Yosemite. San Francisco and Los Angeles, with several great museums each, and with smaller museums in some of their semi-encircling towns, are, in this respect, like cities on the Atlantic Coast.

Thirty of the larger museums in Washington, Oregon, and California have buildings—nearly a score of them completed within the past ten years, only three dating before 1900. Several of the small museums are very good; Santa Barbara has two of such. In California are some of the best little buildings in the country; the one for science at Pacific Grove cost only \$14,000 in 1932. Some of the college museums are also well housed, witness Seattle, Eugene, Berkeley, and Oakland.

The Coast has a fair showing of historic house museums, the oldest of which are California missions. The Sonoma Mission was taken over by the state; La Purísima Concepción Mission near Lompoc has been restored by state and nation; and others that have not fallen into ruin are kept open to visitors by the church, as at the great San Juan Capistrano. Besides, there are fifteen house museums including Sutter's Fort and the Monterey Customs House.

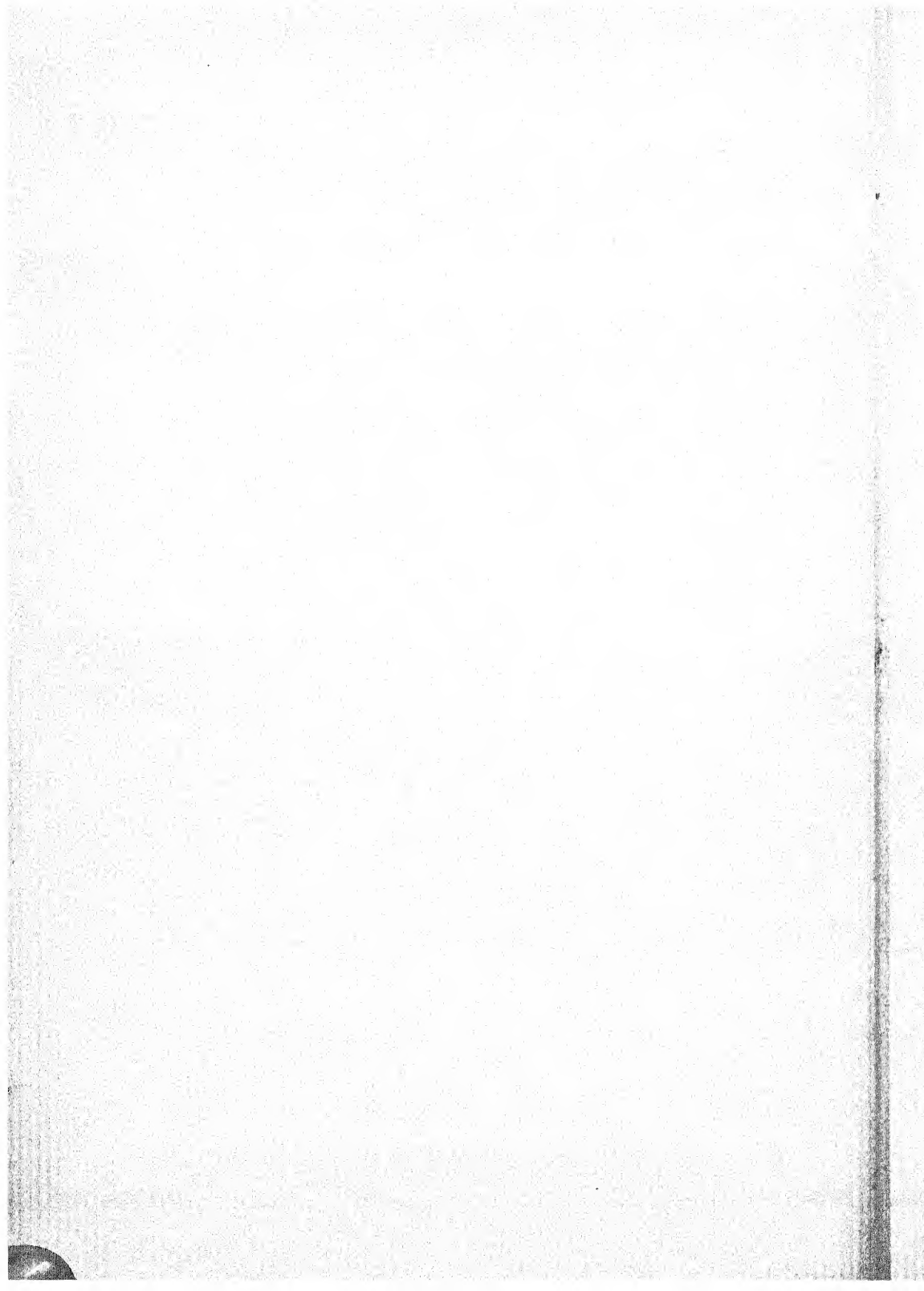
All five national parks of the West Coast—Mount Rainier, Crater Lake, Lassen, Yosemite, and Sequoia—have their park museums. The Yosemite Museum is the largest of its kind.



*Photo by Conrad Kramer*

LABORATORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY

SANTA FE



*Arizona and New Mexico*, though a region of desert and mountain, are culturally like a richly seeded field. Countless museums are germinating in the earth, and scientific work is nurturing them. Multitudes of archaeological sites—themselves exhibits in various stages of preparation, or still untouched—seize upon the imagination and made the observer picture this area developed for education as his children may know it. Already there are little museums of archaeology in four national monuments, and other field museums at widely separated sites. All of these are local in scope except the research museum of Gila Pueblo near Globe, which has regional collections.

As to communities with museums: Santa Fe is New Mexico; and Flagstaff, Prescott, Phoenix, and Tucson are Arizona. They have 13 museums among them. The Laboratory of Anthropology at Santa Fe is concerned with anthropology of the whole Southwest. Santa Fe and Tucson have state museums and also state supported historical societies, and several towns in New Mexico have little museums that are recent fruits of the state museum's lending policy. A museum of geology at Grand Canyon, and a couple of historic house museums finish the picture.

This is a land of ranches and mines, but also it is the stronghold of aboriginal color, a resort of travelers, a garden spot for tourist education.

*Texas and Oklahoma* have four good museum cities: Dallas, Houston, Austin, and San Antonio. In Texas there are small public museums at eight other places; and in Oklahoma, the State Historical Society at the capital and now the first museum of art in the state at Tulsa. The grandest history exhibit of the region is the cluster of Franciscan missions at San Antonio—one of them, the Alamo, a museum.

This is not as yet a strong development, but its growth

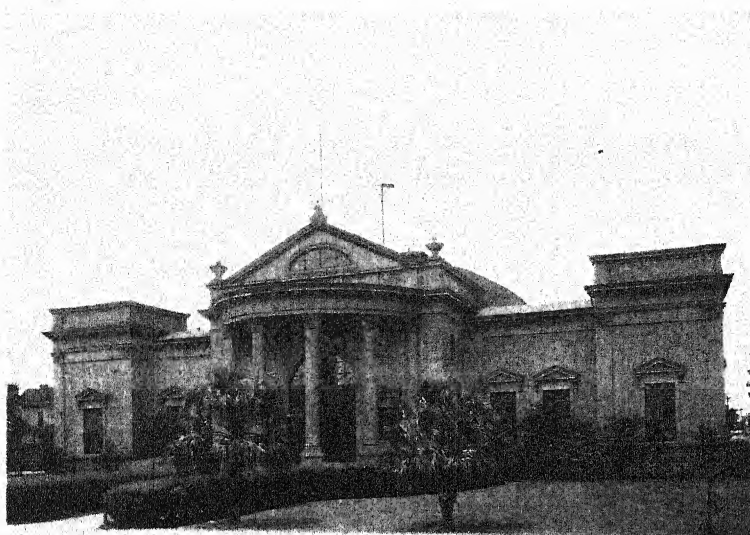


is good—four new buildings in 1936, three more in 1937, and three more in 1938. The region is endowed by nature with resources that will carry it very far.

*The Southeast*, from the lower Mississippi to Chesapeake Bay, is a land of little and of much. New Orleans, Charleston, Memphis, and Richmond are museum centers; about 25 other places have public museums, mostly of art though among others is the unique Mariners' Museum at Newport News; there are several state museums, notable the one at New Orleans and the leading state museum of art at Richmond; and half a dozen universities, from Tulane to Virginia, have active museums. The country's oldest museum is at Charleston, and southern tradition is reflected in many historic house museums—more than 100 all told, almost half that number in Virginia alone, including Mount Vernon and the famous restoration of Colonial Williamsburg. State parks in Kentucky are preserving old houses, and national reservations in half a dozen states from Virginia to Mississippi are also giving rise to trailside museums of history.

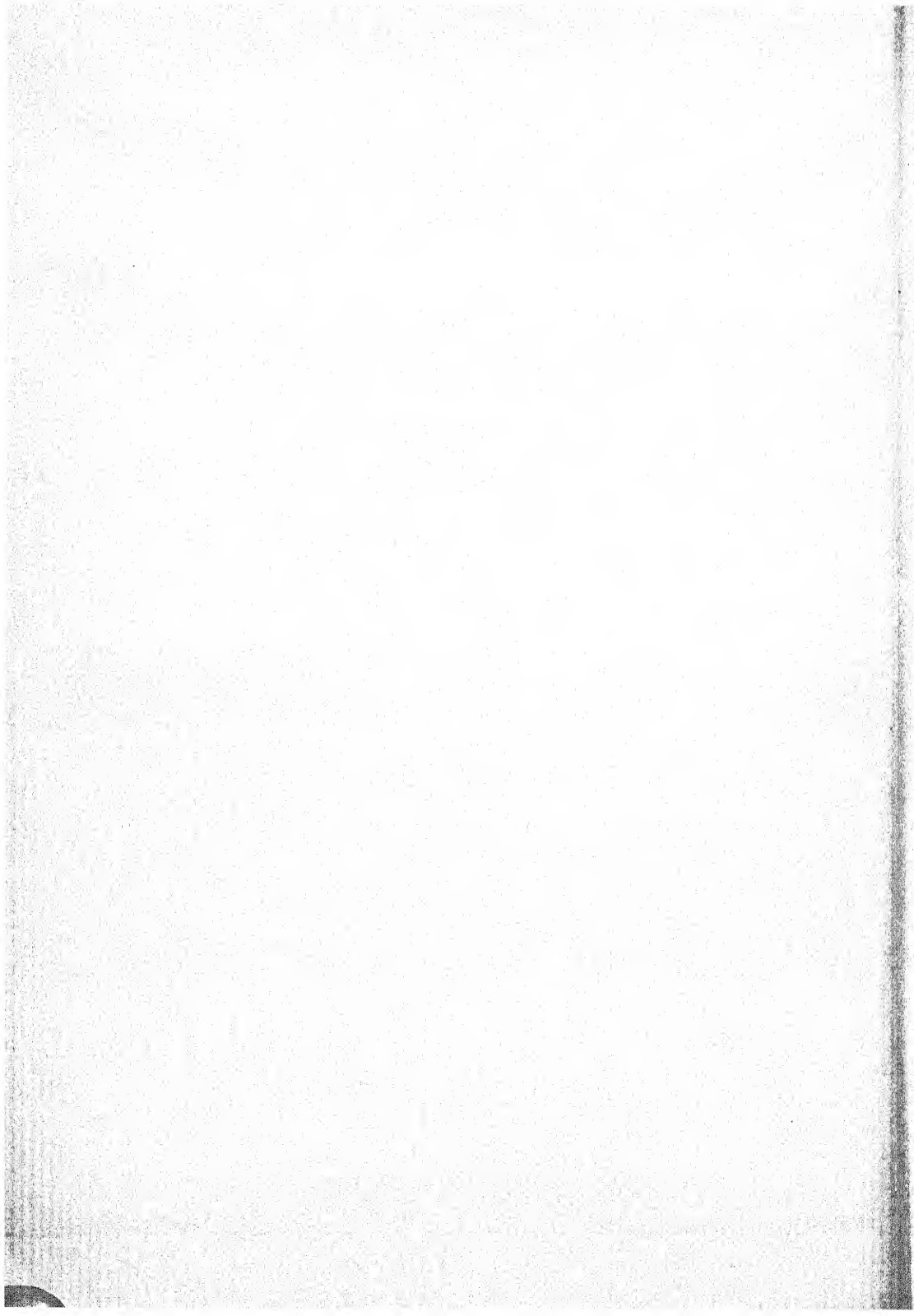
The region is backward because of historic calamity that has now translated itself into problems of an agrarian population retarded by poverty, farm tenancy, illiteracy, and bad public education. But in spite of these handicaps, museums are getting ahead.

*The District of Columbia* belongs to the whole country; and also it is a place where people live. This dual character of Washington is shown in its institutions. Just as, for libraries, there is the national Library of Congress and the local Public Library of the District; so, for museums, there are the national museums under the Smithsonian Institution and the local Corcoran, Phillips and Modern Art galleries. The local system has striking gaps—most plainly the absence of science and history museums. The national system is unevenly developed but growing fast.



THE CHARLESTON MUSEUM

CHARLESTON



*Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York*, with Newark, are practically an area by themselves. Save for Trenton's state museum, Morristown's historical park museums, Princeton's university museums, and a few public museums like those of Wilmington, Hagerstown, and Montclair, the institutions of the big cities make up the museum scene of Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey and adjacent tips of Pennsylvania and New York. Newark has a progressive general museum, and Baltimore has four public museums, including two considerable museums of art. Philadelphia has a dozen public museums, an industry museum and a commerce museum, and also special museums and a chain of colonial houses. She runs neck-and-neck with Chicago in museum standing generally and ahead of Chicago in art.

New York has the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the American Museum of Natural History—which alone would make this city the museum metropolis. But also New York has ten special museums and a dozen historic house museums. And the Boroughs of Brooklyn and Richmond have general museums of their own. Public museum buildings in the city have cost more than \$30,000,000—one sixth as much as all the museum buildings of the country taken together. The annual operating expenditure of New York's museums is nearly \$5,000,000—three times as much as in any other city and over a fourth of the total expenditure of museums in the United States.

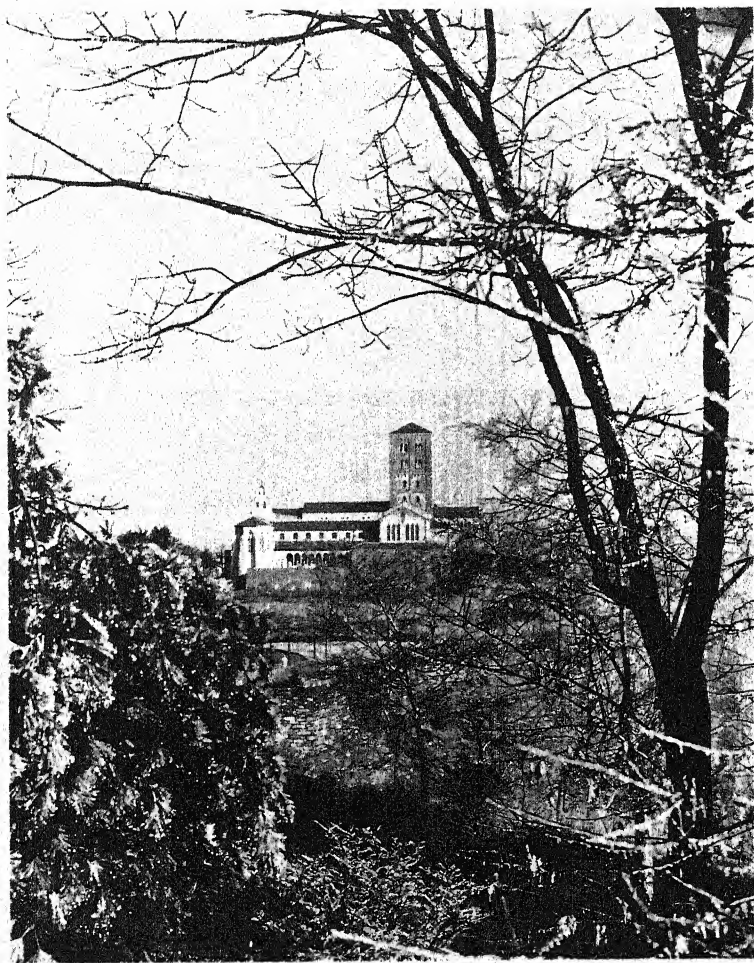
Thus one sees museums in the mind's eye—quickly, as thought flies back over experience—but to see museums in reality takes two or three years of ceaseless going about. They form a vast and far-flung development, as countless—so it seems to the traveler—as the heavenly bodies above. To review them hastily is but to lose sight of their importance in the American scene.

RELATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF AREAS can be only vaguely known from observations in the field, but from statistics one should be able to reach fair estimates of relative standings. The tables of Appendix V make such comparisons for the two most recent years for which the American Association of Museums has prepared these figures.

From Table 4 of Appendix V it will be seen that the Middle Atlantic division (New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey) led in 1935. The rating of 100% in the table means *best*, not *perfect*; this serves as the high record with which others can be compared. New England has less than a third as much development, but also she has only a third the population and therefore the per capita attainment is nearly equal to the best. The Middle West (not as culturally defined, with ragged edges both east and west, but strictly the Census Bureau's Middle West which is called the East North Central division) is third, with 64% of the best per capita. It is necessary to hold strictly to census areas for these calculations, since statistics of population are available only on that basis. The Pacific Coast division is fourth with about half (54%) as good a showing per capita as the best, although its quantity of museums, so to speak, is only 17%. Fifth is the South Atlantic area with 39% of the best per capita. Then comes the great central area, made up of the Census Bureau's West North Central and Mountain divisions, with better than 25%; it is the low population that pulls up this area, as the actual museum quantity is small. Finally come the East South Central division (Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, and Mississippi), and the West South Central division (Texas and Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana), each with a small percentage.

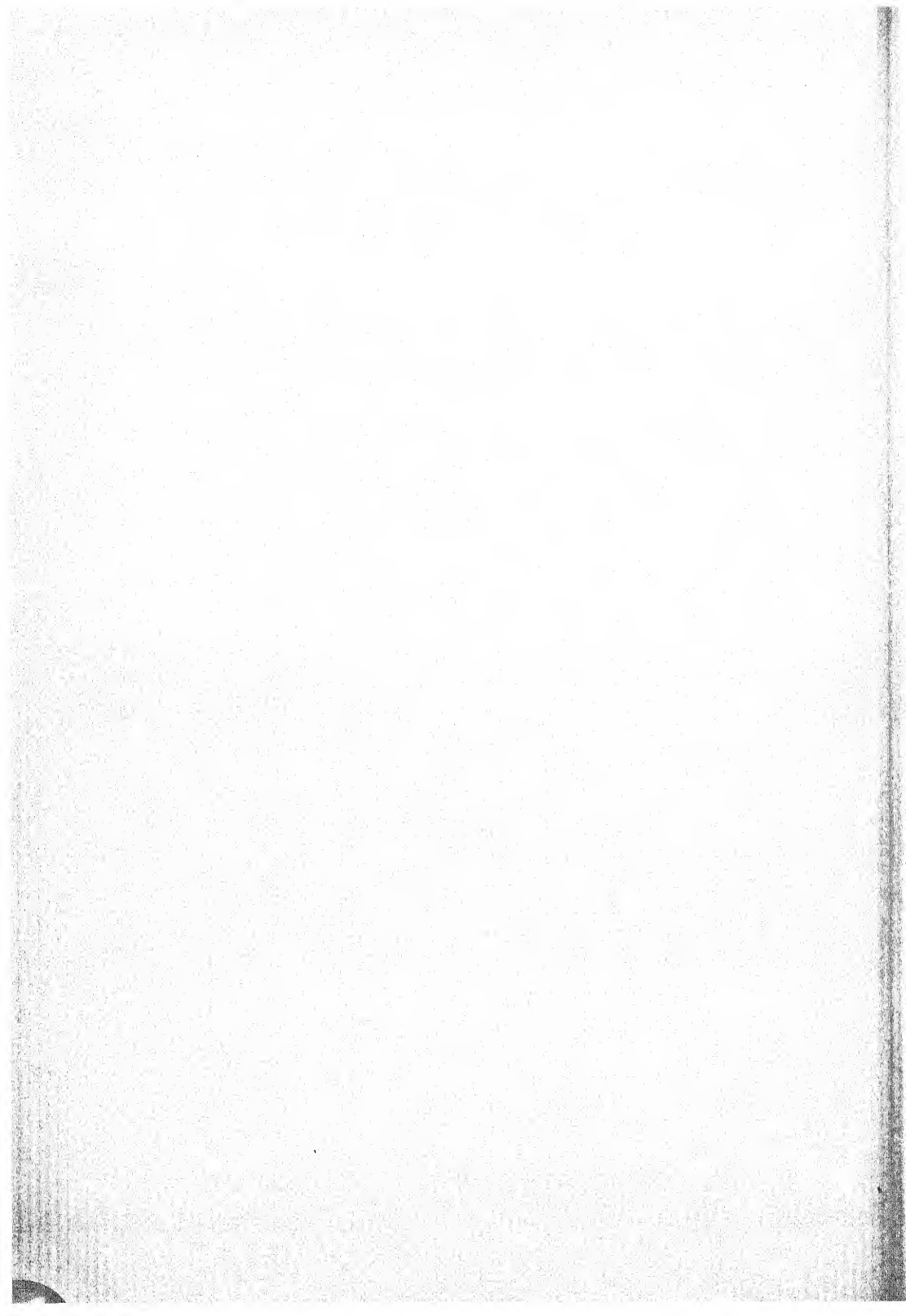
State-by-state comparisons are less involved. As shown by Table 2 of the same Appendix, New York is





*Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art*  
THE CLOISTERS

NEW YORK



first and Massachusetts is second. These and the next three states—Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Illinois—show distinctly superior development. Connecticut, to be sure, has only 11% in quantity, but Connecticut is not very large and hence her per capita showing is high.

Passing now to the bottom of the table one finds startlingly low records for many states—Arkansas at the end of the list with only a small fraction of 1% in both columns, and ten other states with less than 1% in the quantity and 5% in the per capita columns. Except for Arkansas, these low-score states are all in the great western spaces (Nevada, South Dakota, Idaho, and Montana) or the Southeast (Mississippi, Kentucky, North Carolina, Alabama, West Virginia, and Georgia).

Scanning the middle portions of the table, one finds Florida in *sixth* place, above California (8), Michigan (10), and Ohio (11). Florida is a backward museum state, but it has the big Ringling Museum of Art which alone saved it in 1935 from having forty-third place. Rhode Island, with only 3% of New York's quantity also gives pause; but Rhode Island gets a score of 56% per capita by reason of her small size. The table bears further examination. It is full of things that one would never guess—and of blows to sectional complacency.

If comparable figures for an earlier year are compared with those for 1935, some idea of growth rates can be formed. For this purpose Tables 3 and 5 (also Appendix V) are added; they show conditions at the end of 1930. An important fact which these tables do not show (since the best record, state or regional, always rates 100%) is that between 1930 and 1935 the best state, New York, increased its quantity by more than one-quarter (27%) and the best division (Middle Atlantic) by more than a third (39%). This means that the scale of things has been advanced, and that any difference of percentage

between the two years, for any state or division, represents only a catching-up or a falling-back in the general procession.

In the five years Massachusetts gained on New York's lead; and New England gained on the leading division. Massachusetts does not have nearly as much in quantity as New York, or New England as much as the Middle Atlantic division, but the ratios climbed from 73% and 75% to 95% and 99% respectively. If this had kept up in 1936 and years since, New England would by now have reached the head of the list. But it has not kept up; New York has lately surged ahead again.

The next most striking change during the five years was that the wide gaps between good and not-so-good, at several levels of the 1930 record, were closed up; in 1935 the ratios make a fairly even descending series from 100% to nearly zero. The next step should be for the tail of the procession to be drawn in, so to speak, by laggards sprinting up. There is, in fact, some indication of this; Nevada climbed from number 48 with nothing, to number 36 with a little; and Arkansas, at the end of 1935, is the only remaining state with a ratio of less than 1%, out of seven states that had less than 1% in 1930. Further, it should be told that *since 1935* others among the undeveloped states have made progress. The Southeast has come up through growth in North Carolina and some in Florida, Mississippi, Kentucky, Alabama, and Georgia. Also Arkansas has jumped well up, leaving West Virginia at the bottom. Colorado and Montana have climbed; and Texas, which just missed being in the low-score group in 1935, has leaped to a place near Washington.

In the lustrum 1930-1935, again, the states with greatest *absolute* gain (not to be discovered directly from comparison of the tables) were the two high-total states of New York and Massachusetts, followed in turn by Cali-

fornia, Ohio, Illinois, and Pennsylvania. The states with greatest *proportionate* gain were Florida, Nebraska, Arizona, Massachusetts, and Virginia. Only nine states slipped back in percentage, and even these made some absolute progress in every case. They are Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Michigan, New Mexico, Colorado, New Jersey, Texas, Alabama, and Arkansas.

However, all of this is but outward measuring.

The *nature* of what has been happening cannot be captured with coefficients and ratios. Museum development is a complex process arising from many forces—some of them working so effectively that they stand out as major influences. Such a force has been that exerted by donors.

THE DONOR'S HAND has done much—probably more than anything else—to shape museums along traditional lines. In tracing the course of collecting (Chapter XIII) we shall see how the benefactor, making his gifts, has created lasting problems of management as well as rich collections. It is the burden of many writings that museums have been stultified by patrons seeking to make themselves remembered; but commentators have not always allowed that the wealthy collector and the collector-trustee have been largely responsible for the very existence and growth of most museums. The work, whatever its awkwardness, had to be done in this way before museums could find new life through the action of other forces—notably social mindedness among museum workers, supported or led by trustees with public spirit. The lingering touch of the donor's hand is felt today in the struggle of educational functions to have their full sway in a system that was formed to be inactive.



Playing on the museum, from the outside so to speak, worldly forces also have shaped the institution and its work. One of the most persistent of these has come from expositions, one of the most forceful from the automobile.

**I**NFLUENCE OF EXPOSITIONS has been felt among museums for nearly a century, coming first from abroad. In 1851 London's Crystal Palace Exposition, the first great international fair, turned out to be a shocking revelation of "what the machine could do," and it prompted the establishment of industrial art museums in different parts of Europe to carry traditional design over the industrial revolution's flood of bad taste by preserving in public collections what was old and good. The Victoria and Albert Museum, founded in 1852, was the first fruit of this effort, and kindred museums sprang up soon afterward in Germany, France, and other countries on the Continent. As a result, much new energy was stirred up among museums—not only the new institutions, but museums generally. However, at the same time a sad disservice was done through propagation of the idea that art objects should be collected as patterns to go by rather than as examples of what has been done—an error in the public mind that still holds museums back. All these influences made their way in time from the Old World to the New.

In this country the fever of preparation for our first great fair, the Centennial Exposition of 1876, did much to launch the era of museum expansion. In time for the great event in Philadelphia, the venerable Academy of Natural Sciences and the Academy of Fine Arts both acquired buildings, and it was no accident that Boston's first building for the Museum of Fine Arts was put up in

the same year, and that New York's American Museum and Metropolitan Museum were both hurrying to finish their new homes. The spirit of the Centennial did much to hatch, all together, these developments that had been incubated for various lengths of time.

As an after-effect, by exposing our weakness in design compared to Europe and the Orient, the Centennial produced the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art—the museum taking permanent possession of Memorial Hall, arts building of the Exposition. Then the National Museum established a department of arts and industries, and soon had a building for it. These influences, with the others like them from abroad, touched many art museums.

In 1893 the World's Columbian Exposition, besides creating the great institutions of Chicago, passed out its compliments to the country by clinching the formula of classical monuments for museums and other public buildings. This was destined to be felt everywhere for many years to come. Other expositions (St. Louis in 1904, San Diego in 1915, and Dallas in 1936) have since given structures to be made permanent as museums; but these have been only local events, not in a class with what Chicago did in 1893 or with what she would do after 40 years more with yet another fair.

In 1933 and 1934, Chicago's Century of Progress Exposition again made museum history—this time by taking the Art Institute as its official exhibition place for art. We are still too near at hand to see all that happened then, but we do know that a large sampling of the country's population (2,995,498 persons, according to turn-styles) went to the greatest of art exhibitions. At the same time a much larger sampling made fifteen million visits to Chicago's six best museums during the two years of the fair. This gave museums the best advertising

they have ever had. Cleveland added to it in 1936 by another first rate art show—an anniversary show of the Cleveland Museum of Art—that formed part of the Great Lakes Exposition. The effects of these events, and of others like them to follow—the next of major importance at the Golden Gate International Exposition of 1939—will long pour in upon every part of the country.

At the San Francisco fair there is a sharp breaking down of lines that heretofore have kept museums and expositions apart. Art directors and curators, to the number of seven or more, have been taken onto the staff of the Golden Gate Exposition. This means that the fair is getting around to cultural matters in earnest, and that hereafter both museums and fairs will have a growing body of common experience to influence what they do. There were beginnings of this in Chicago's science building of 1933, where museum techniques were put to novel uses in models that have since been shown by museums. San Francisco, on the art side, goes much farther by employing museum people. In consequence, art museums are sure to be strongly influenced, especially toward making their exhibits more understandable to the layman.

To be certain that lessons of the exposition are learned, several museums are making studies of all the exhibits at San Francisco—as well as of those at the New York World's Fair of 1939—and from the studies publications will result. These are exciting developments.

**I**MPLICATIONS OF THE AUTOMOBILE have broken the way for two new kinds of museums, and are pressing other changes upon museums in consequence.

One of the new kinds is that of historic house museums—houses preserved as shrines. Already there are more

than 640 of them and the number is growing fast. There were only a few before the day of the motor; the oldest, Washington's headquarters at Newburgh, goes back to 1850 as an institution, and Mount Vernon to 1860; but even by 1895 there were only about twenty historic house museums. Then came the automobile—four cars in 1895, eight thousand in 1900, nearly half a million in 1910, more than twenty-five million in 1938—and in the same years came the extensive saving of historic houses as museums. The rise of the car and of the museum had similar stages of progression, with the most rapid increases in the same runs of years. This was no mere coincidence. Until people could travel casually and leave beaten paths with ease, they were not ready to visit scattered historic spots. It was only when motor touring developed that historic houses could become important to the public. The car released the action of enlightenment, wealth, and patriotic pride upon the vanishing monuments of the nation.

The other new class of museums—that of trailsides, or field museums—is younger still. There were none of them at all before the time of the car; and even after the advent of motoring there had to be a further wait until national parks, where these museums would appear, were being visited extensively by tourists. That came about in the 1920's. By the early 'thirties the movement had astonishing momentum and had overflowed national parks. State park administrations in different parts of the country had taken up the idea, and even local parks began to have trailsides under the aegis of local public museums. Now the federal government is projecting national *parkways*—"elongated parks" skirting highways reserved for recreational and educational use. Along such parkways there will surely be wayside museums explaining the scenery, geologic forms, wild life, and

archaeology. By all indications, trailside and wayside museums are destined to be exceedingly familiar.

Historic houses and trailsides have an important message worthy of close reading on behalf of museums of other kinds—a message that deserves to be digested by all who are concerned, in whatever way, with adult education.

These museums-at-large (*at large* in the sense that they have no local clientele but draw their tourist visitors from everywhere) cater almost solely to grown-ups. Children may come to historic houses in cities; but most of the houses and the trailsides are fairly inaccessible to all save motorists; and motorists are adults. Moreover, they are adults whose behavior is shaped by their motoring; they hunt around for meals, and many of them also hunt for lodgings when night comes. So it is not surprising that refreshments, meals, and even tourist accommodations are coming to be of concern to tourists' museums. Many historic house museums offer certain of these services themselves. They are not tea-houses, or restaurants, or inns; they are genuine museums, controlled by trustees, providing hospitality for visitors. They are museums breaking new ground; and the fact that they are innocent of making an experiment in method, or of introducing a novel plan, gives all the deeper meaning to what they do. They are responding to creative social forces that play upon them. The public welcomes the change, and many visitors are taking advantage of the new privilege of staying awhile with something that interests them. This shows up plainly at Williamsburg where museum hostelries take care of visitors, and it appears also at state parks and national parks where circumstances bring living accommodations and trailside museums together.

These facts tally with others that have nothing to do directly with museums. It is well known that auto-





MARIPOSA GROVE MUSEUM, TRILLSIDE

YOSEMITE



vagabonding has enabled the tourist camp industry to cut itself a large slice of the hotel trade. The new industry grew more than any other during the depression, and now it gathers force for a further spread. Many of the old tourist camps have already become tourist "courts," and such places are on the way to offering excellent accommodations. In consequence city hotels have been forced to consider establishing branches out of town to share in the new business. This is a familiar type of change; other services have been going out along the highways. The sale of gasoline was inevitably the first. The restaurant business was next. Entertainment has followed—witness the summer theatre, three times more numerous in one recent year than in the year before. Education is going now with its museums, and others of its establishments will surely take to the highway sooner or later. Then much of adult education may be offered miles out in the country. There lies an important opportunity as yet unheeded by most adult educators.

Out of town—at resorts, at parks, and wherever else people stop overnight in their riding—will be discovered the new leisure that has been talked about as though it would be lurking in homes and city streets. Away from telephones and habitual duties is the place to bring out what there is of the student in us all. Thousands of uneasy souls may enlist in city evening classes, but millions will share in anything that gives a further turn of interest to week-end and summer vacationing.

It is true that the one-night population of a tourist camp just hangs around; there is nothing else to do. It is true that resort gatherings oscillate between play and boredom. It is true that many (perhaps most) people, wherever they may be, are not equal to much effort at self-improvement. But the minority has more people than education can possibly deal with now. Educators

wanting to meet some minority members may catch up with them by riding out of town. What happens then will depend upon the pursuers' skill and humor and humanity.

What about the effect of all this upon urban institutions? Is there a threat against community museums? Quite the reverse. Just as city streets will carry more traffic as the use of the highway grows, so city museums and libraries will have to meet growing demands for community service as their public is awakened and cultivated in the open. Increased interest and larger support for all museums will certainly result.

But city museums are now being molded *directly* also by the automobile. No longer is it true that a public museum's visitors are drawn mostly from the population near at hand. More than half of them are strangers—sightseers who are looking around in the place where they find themselves. When museums assimilate this fact they may be prompted more strongly than now to arrange exhibits so that casual visitors will have something to look at quickly, and so that serious visitors may conveniently have what more they want. How this is already coming about we shall see in Chapter XV.

**F**ORCES WITHIN the body of museums have also shaped these institutions and their work.

At first the originality and initiative of museum people had to operate in isolation. Trial and error was the method, and parallel developments came only from natural sifting out of what was wise and useful from what was foolish or perhaps merely clever. By this process some of the rudiments of administration, exhibition, and interpretation were laid down before museum people got

together for a pooling of experience. However, not until isolation was broken down did progress become general.

The idea of collaboration among museums and those interested in them has taken form as the association of museums. This had its origin in Europe in the last century; the British Museums Association was founded in 1889. Then in 1906 came the American Association of Museums. Although both organizations long ago projected active work on behalf of museums, neither was able for some years to do much more than hold meetings and publish the papers read. But the delay was only right; the necessary preliminary for what would come later was the development of a museum literature. Writing in the 'eighties, Jevons was impelled to say in his *Methods of Social Reform* (London, 1883) that, despite the long standing of museums, "hardly anything has been written about their general principles of management and economy." This was true for the world at large then, but twenty-five years later there was a great amount of printed matter on this subject. The British association's proceedings, appearing first in 1890, were replaced by *The Museums Journal* at the turn of the century; and, similarly, the American association's proceedings, first published in 1907, gave place after a decade to a journal and later to a monograph series and a newspaper, *The Museum News*. Meanwhile, from 1905, the German journal *Museumskunde* had been started under individual sponsorship; and also in Germany there had been held the famous Mannheim Conference upon Museums and the Working Classes—first continental congress of museum workers, from which came a volume of discourses that showed how in 1903 European museums were reflecting the social turmoil of that time.

On this side, also, efforts were made by the turn of the century to take stock of thought and practice. From



Washington George Brown Goode had made a brilliant statement in his famous paper of 1895 on "The Principles of Museum Administration" (reprinted in the Goode memorial volume—Part Two of the U. S. National Museum's *Annual Report* of 1897); and later Benjamin Ives Gilman, in his *Museum Ideals of Purpose and Method* (Cambridge, 1918) gave out his philosophy as one of the professional-spirited group at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, from which group also had issued four volumes of *Communications* on building and exhibition problems. But museum people were still isolated; advances were sporadic and little known; there was no concensus of thought or action.

In 1923 an important step was taken. For some time there had been the voice of one Paul Marshall Rea crying in the wilderness—urging upon the American association a program that called for money and a staff. In 1920 Rea had put the idea forward in a presidential address, "The Future of Museums in the Life of the People," in which he contrasted the role of a professional association, having meetings and proceedings, with that of an institutional association, supported well by museums and working in their common interest. Three years later, when the association met at Charleston to observe the 150th anniversary of the museum there, it opened the fourth half-century of museum history in America, fittingly, by putting into practice the idea that museums should undertake collectively and actively to solve some of their problems. This was done by providing for a permanent office of the association—a step that was possible because a New York educational foundation, the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, was ready to make a grant if further support could be found. Further support *was* found; the convention was gripped with excitement; members rose and made gifts; trustees pledged museum contribu-

tions for a number of years; the Smithsonian Institution proffered office space in the National Museum. "These developments," said the association's announcement, "signal the beginning of a new era for the association; but much more than that, they are believed to mark the beginning of a new era for the museums of America."

The statement might have gone further still, if the future could have been known, for there were unmistakable repercussions abroad. Within a few years activities in London pointed to a staff organization for the British association, and results came in 1929 when an office was established with the help of a grant from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. In the meantime the League of Nations had founded in Paris an Institute of Intellectual Cooperation out of which, in 1926, came the International Museums Office.

There are other associations on the same road of development. The Scandinavian *Museiförbundet*, established in 1915 with sections now in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden; the German *Museumsbund* from 1917; the French *Association Generale des Conservateurs* from 1921; and several younger organizations like those of Holland, Austria, Switzerland, and Poland. The Far East has a strong association in Japan and a very young one in China. British South Africa and Australia and New Zealand have organized.

Early in its life, the American association came upon a problem that the British body had met with also: the question of whether art museums and science museums should have separate organizations. In both countries the decision was the same—that they should not. It was perceived that all museums have in common certain interests naturally binding them together in trying to improve themselves and to gain a greater following, and that even special problems are best approached from a

background of experience in all the museum fields. Time has abundantly proved the wisdom of this conclusion. Further, by the same means, the association has been spared temptation to drift off from institutional problems, which are its proper concern, into subject matters of art, science, and history, which are the concern of national societies in these fields.

The association of museums recognizes two different kinds of duty. First it has the duty of being helpful to museum people by keeping them abreast of the museum world through publications, national and regional meetings, and consultation in office and field and through the mail—a work that returns all it costs directly to the 270 leading museums and the hundreds of museum people supporting it. But the association's chief responsibility is very different from this. It consists of shaping broadly the course of museum development by discovering strengths that are not widely recognized and giving them full play, by pointing out weaknesses in the hope of removing them, and by seeking improved methods of museum work through surveys and research.

There is an ironic difficulty in carrying on this work; namely, that what helps the museums most in the long run is least able to command their financial backing. Direct services can be carried by memberships, but long range work does not make a natural claim upon the funds of the institutions that stand to benefit. Similarly, efforts that lead to a general movement, in which the initial cause is soon lost from sight, have little prospect of being backed by those with something to gain. Experience offers many illustrations. A short time ago the association received a grant from a foundation to start scientific study of museum methods. In vain it would have sought from museums the funds required for this, although in just a few years the experiment has ushered

in the day of objective tests for museum methods, and has already brought gifts to several museums for applying what is learned. Another example: when the association built the first demonstration trailsides, with foundation aid, no science museum board would have cared to assume a substantial part of the cost although the indirect result, after little more than a decade, is a general movement likely to recoup the fortunes of public science museums. Again: when the association gave wide effect, through a study and a report, to the historic house museum movement, then but slightly recognized, money for the purpose had to come from a foundation, not from history museums. And in the same way, abroad, the well-known reports on museums of the British Isles by Sir Henry Miers in 1928 and S. F. Markham in 1938 would never have been financed by the institutions on behalf of which they were made.

Plainly the inference is that long-range work for museums must be subsidized. It cannot spring from support within the museum field. This means two things—that individual projects must be laid before outside sources of aid, and also that the national organization which has the experience, records, contacts, good will, and other resources for doing long-range work has a case for the general and lasting support of philanthropists and foundations. This is the ground upon which the American Association of Museums lays its need for endowment.

In keeping with the association's efforts to improve conditions, there have been many independent pioneering efforts of museums and of individual leaders and progressive groups of workers. In the last generation there was the elevation of taxidermy as a craft, and the development of methods for dramatic exhibition. During more recent years important contributions have been made through training of personnel at various museums. Now techni-

cal methods in art research are being worked out and given to the world. All such advances come from the few but they benefit the many.

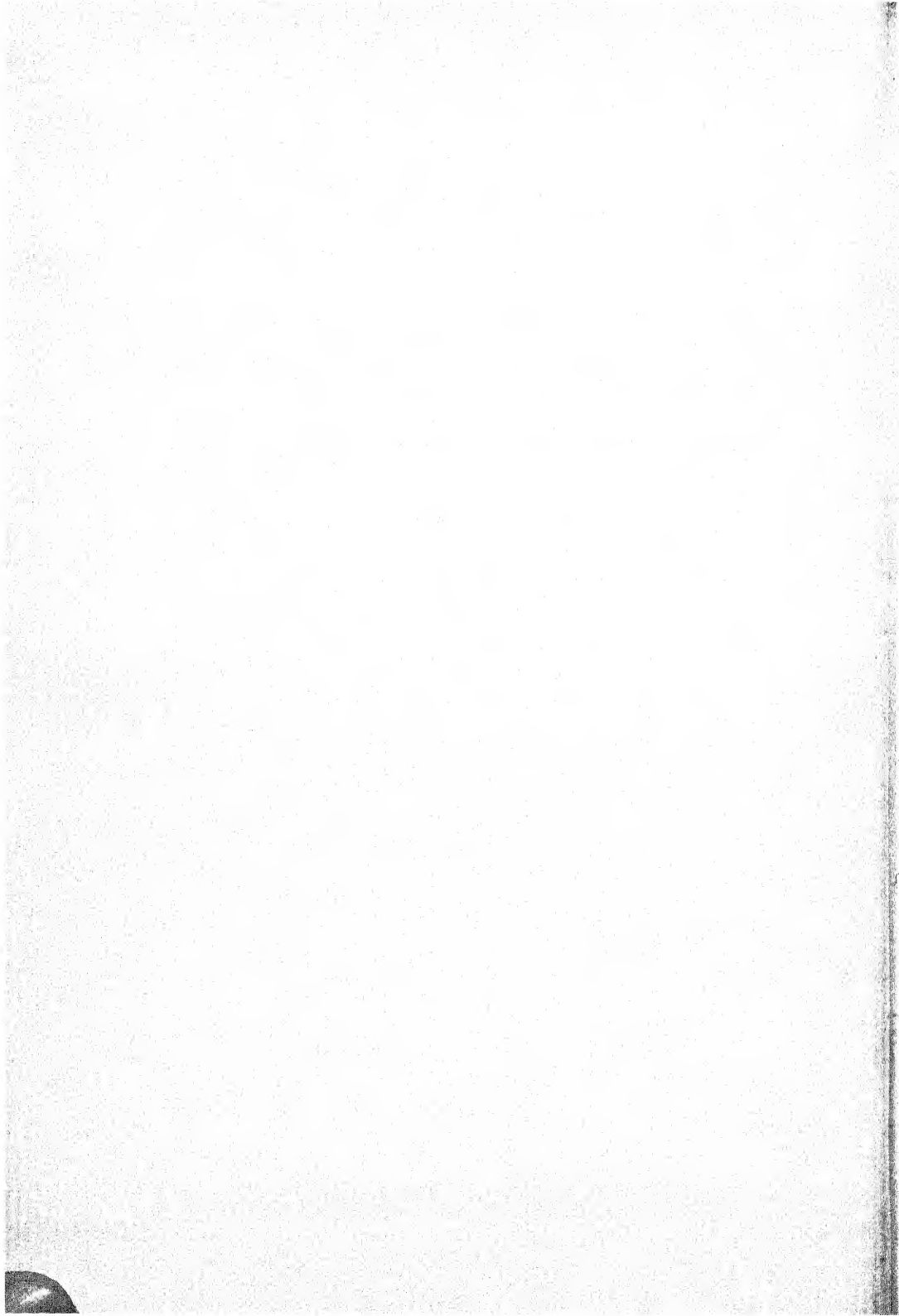
Movements that develop within institutional circles are not cut off, as is sometimes supposed, from larger movements in the world; they have a way of coming most freely when great forces are at large. The country's first museum was born in the fore-hours of national independence. Europe had seen museums conceived in the excitations of the Renaissance, brought forth in the labors of war, and reared in the vegetative Victorian years. Russia, after the Revolution, multiplied her museums by five times—by nine times in outlying parts of the country. Thus, again and again, museums have received new impetus from the lurches of humanity. And now, with turmoil everywhere, these institutions are gaining ground more surely than ever before.

In numbers, museums stand at present about where libraries were some fifty years ago. The libraries have gone on to number ten thousand in the United States, but museums are not likely to take fifty years for an equal increase. They are appearing already at the rate of one a week, and the rate accelerates with each passing year. Meanwhile, growing in strength, the existing museums take ever a more important part in the daily life of the people.



THE INSTITUTION

*PART TWO*



## MUSEUMS OF SCIENCE

### CHAPTER II

"Now COME the grand divisions of the entire whale host . . . and these shall comprehend them all both small and large." *Moby Dick*.

So there comes first—as in the order of time—the grand division of science, or natural history, museums.

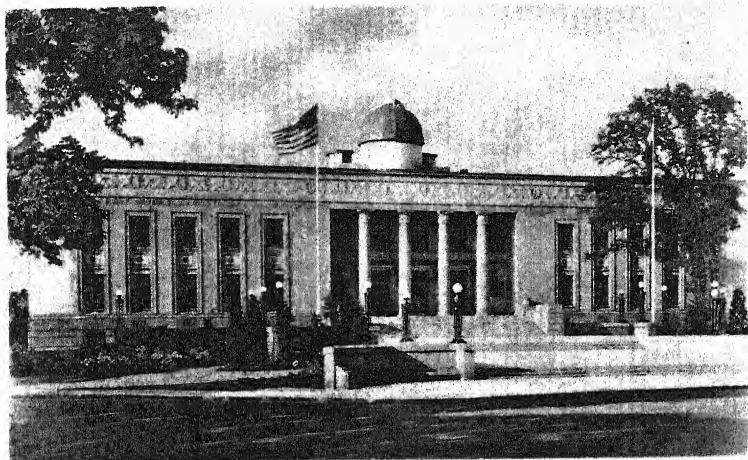
**S**CIENCE OR NATURAL HISTORY? In corporate names of museums the words *natural history* are commoner; but *science* is gaining ground, and it better describes the present scope of this most venerable museum field.

Traditionally museums have dealt with the geological and biological sciences—the old natural history—that could be represented in exhibits by fragments or remains of the manifold natural forms. The physical and chemical sciences, more elusive, have been neglected, though not forgotten; a conspectus issued by the American Museum as early as 1910 included an item, "Physical sciences: no exhibitions ready." There was little chance of representing them as long as exhibits were but synopses of systematic collections, but, with the appearance of exhibits on heredity, evolution, and other abstract subjects the time was at hand for portraying all of the sciences. This is done, now, by a number of erstwhile "natural history" museums—most fully by the Buffalo Museum of Science, with well balanced exhibits to explain

principles of mechanics, light, electricity, heat, sound, and the constitution of matter. From these subjects, an explanation of the atom leads over to earth materials and geology, which is familiar ground. Here museums have long begun their story, going on through fossils to living things, and so to man and society. As the full range of science becomes the usual thing, *natural history* is less and less adequate as a descriptive term, *science* more and more suitable.

There is another reason, by the way, for using the word *science* both in proper names and as a generic term. This has to do with the confusion threatened ever since a few important museums of another kind began calling themselves museums of *science and industry*. These others are primarily concerned with applications of science, both physical and natural, and they seem to be known best as industry museums (Chapter V). The pure science museums, of natural history tradition, give little or no heed to applications. Even applied biology (including hygiene and medicine, which a few of them have touched upon in past) has gone over to the industry, or applied science, museums.

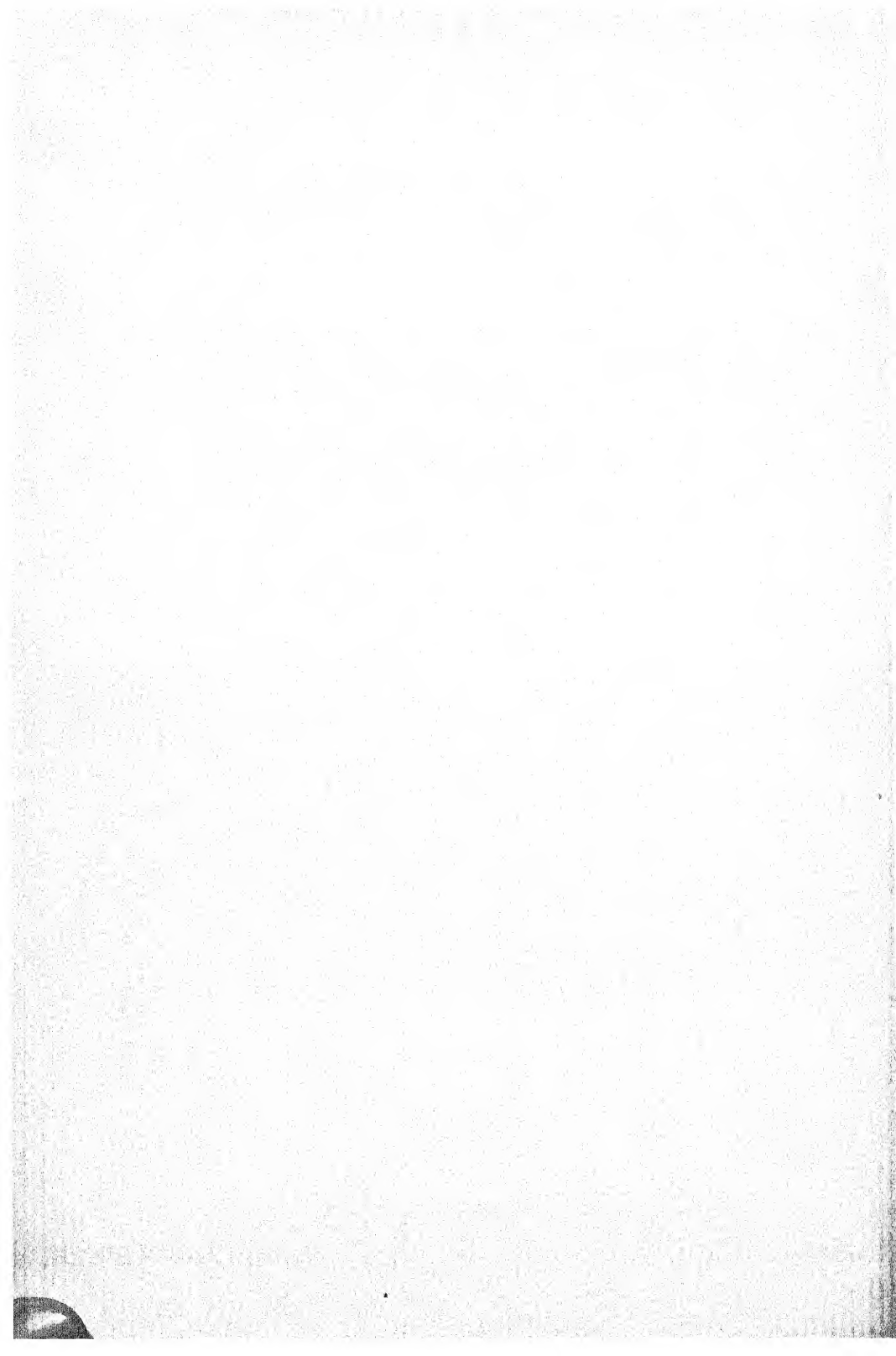
Long before other physical sciences were admitted, astronomy was accorded a small place in science museums. The heavenly bodies offered no actual specimens, except in the form of meteors, for display; but transparencies and models were shown. However, until very recently the little museum at Oshkosh had as much on exhibition as the big museum in New York. Then planetariums arrived from Jena, and the American Museum's department of astronomy could grow to importance. New York's planetarium was not the first in this country, but it is the only one attached to a science museum. The first (1930) was the Adler Planetarium and Astronomical Museum in Chicago, an independent institution. In 1933



BUFFALO MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

BUFFALO





came the Fels Planetarium attached to the Franklin Institute, an industry museum, in Philadelphia; then in 1935, the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, independent, and the Hayden Planetarium of the American Museum; and in 1936, the home-built Rosicrucian Planetarium in San Jose, California. Soon to be finished is the Buhl Planetarium in Pittsburgh, independent. Planetariums are plainly not going to belong solely to science museums, but they will stimulate science museums to deal more fully with astronomy. This effect can be seen at Springfield, Massachusetts, where the Museum of Natural History added to its exhibits the small but adequate Seymour Planetarium, of its own construction, in 1937. And, before that, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History had finished its Hanna Star Dome with a perforated vault and a different lighting circuit for each month of the year.

**A**NTHROPOLOGY'S PLACE is rightfully in the science museum. History and art museums have need for some of the materials of this subject—to use in illustrating the story of the past and to consider aesthetically—but anthropology is a science, and any museum dealing with it systematically is in that respect scientific, no matter what its character may be in other respects.

Each branch of anthropology has fared differently. Physical anthropology has had much attention in research, as at the National, Field, and American museums, but not much place in exhibits until recently, following growth of interest in the related spheres of human anatomy and physiology. Archaeology is covered unevenly—early civilizations of Europe being somewhat overlooked by science museums because art museums did much to

open up the classical field. And ethnology is more and more getting into the hands of special museums of this science like those of Cambridge, New York, Berkeley, Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Santa Fe (Appendix D).

General treatments of anthropology are to be found in many museums—some with extensive exhibits and full scale groups like those at New York and Chicago, others with synoptic exhibits and using dioramas like those at St. Paul and Milwaukee. There is at present a tendency to link up archaeology and ethnology with contemporary civilization in science exhibits showing the evolution of society, as at Buffalo.

**A** CHANGE OF PURPOSE has come over science museums under cover of an unchanged expression of what these museums are for.

The original aim was that of survey—inventorying what there was in a new and unfamiliar environment, from intellectual curiosity often supported by tacit hope of exploitation. By the time museums had discovered themselves, as well as their surroundings, the Smithsonian Institution's formal declaration—"for the increase and diffusion of knowledge"—had been made, and it might have served for all as well as any slogan could. The method was gathering, taking in samples to describe and show. This was everybody's affair for a time; but, when science slipped far into the esoteric business of classifying and naming, the public dropped behind.

After the middle of last century the issue of evolution came along. Then science turned from picking apart to putting together. And the public, awakened by questions about the age of the earth and the lineage of man, began preparing\*unconsciously to participate again. By

the turn of the century the new attitude had established itself in museums. Habitat groups and the beginnings of ecological study reflected the desire of layman and scientist alike to accept nature whole. Appreciation of nature now became the theme. Conservation was taking the place of use as the ultimate motive. The recreation and outdoor education movements followed.

Still good is the old declaration about increase and diffusion of knowledge. But now it implies a pattern of thought and action marking an era that is only just begun.

**T**HE DIFFERENT KINDS of science museums fall into a simple classification (Appendix U). The most numerous group is that of college and university museums, which, with a few school museums, number 523—large and small, mostly small (Appendices K and I).

Local public museums form the strongest group though numbering only 72, including museums controlled by natural history societies (Appendix D). Children's museums of science number six (Appendix N); these are public museums appealing to a special class of people—very young people.

It is altogether right to put society museums with those of institutional form, since the two kinds are commonly linked by a process of growing up. This transformation overtook most of the earlier society museums after the 'seventies, and among younger organizations it still goes on. When a scientific society prospers, its work needs close attention and control goes usually to a small and self-perpetuating board; museum members retain some privileges but little power; fraternal meetings give place to educational gatherings; volunteer workers are suc-

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ceeded by a paid staff, and services to the public and to schools grow up. The name of the organization often reflects this change, as it did, for instance, when the Worcester Natural History Society became also the Worcester Museum of Natural History. The repetition of this process in the careers of growing young societies is not peculiar to science. Art and history know it too.

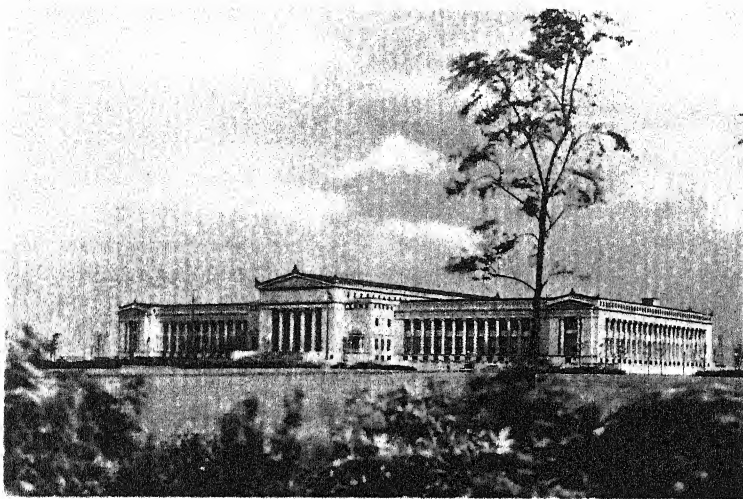
State museums of science number 12 (Appendix G), and there is practically a separate national science museum in the form of those departments of the general U. S. National Museum that occupy the Natural History Building in Washington.

Trailside museums in national, state, and local parks number over 50 (Appendix P). Beyond doubt this fast-increasing group will soon make the second largest class of science museums.

This leaves a few private museums (Appendix L), and sub-museums belonging to libraries, research laboratories, government departments, and other parent organizations (Appendices Q and R). The total number of science museums is over 700—besides which there are science departments, principally in 50 general public museums (Appendix E) and 15 general state museums (Appendix G).

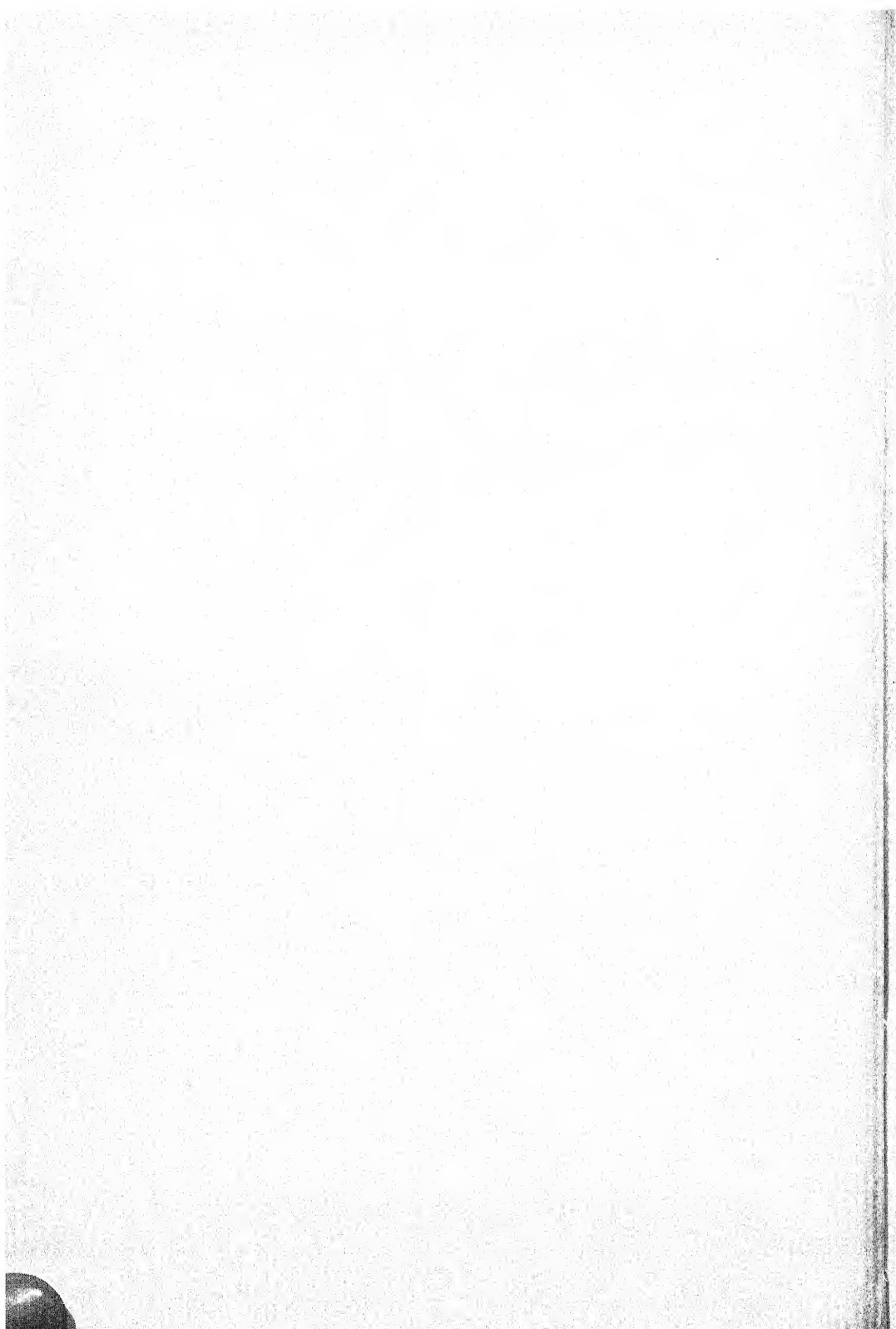
**C**OMMUNITY COVERAGE by science museums, or the number of places with public museums or other museums acting in their stead, is not great. There are only 50-odd communities with regular public science museums—special museums of anthropology not included. Add the places where science is embraced in the field of a general public museum—at Los Angeles, Newark, Reading, Pittsfield, Flagstaff, and Three Oaks, as a





*Photo by Henry Fuermann and Sons*  
FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

CHICAGO



range of examples from great city to small town. Add also the cities—including Albany, Trenton, Columbus, Raleigh, Lincoln, and Springfield—that have state museums representing science locally; and one more for the National Museum. Also some college towns should be counted in, since about a dozen campus museums are serving the public well—notably at New Haven, where Yale's Peabody Museum of Natural History has actually a children's department. This makes a total of say 130 communities in which science is covered.

But how many places might be expected to have public or quasi-public museums of science? Who is to say? It is arbitrary to hand down a decision, as some have done, that every one of the 190 cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants should have a museum. Almost half of the places with science museums now are smaller than that; and some, like Pacific Grove in California, Flagstaff in Arizona, and St. Johnsbury in Vermont, have very good museums for populations of less than 10,000. Large cities, as a rule, have acquired museums first; about half the museums in cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants date from the last century, against less than one-third of those in smaller places. Also, large cities make by far the best proportionate showing at present; but smaller places are now having their turn and are getting most of the new science museums.

Does it, then, follow that in time there will be a science museum in nearly all of the country's 16,000 incorporated places large and small, or even in most of the 6,000 places with upwards of a thousand citizens? Not for a long time unless things are speeded up. At the present rate it would take about 4,000 years to reach the easier of these goals—even if nothing else happened.

However, this fails to bring out something important about the science museums that have appeared. They

have flourished. Among the long established, some have grown prodigiously; the museums of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Milwaukee, Buffalo, San Diego, the National Museum, and the principal state museums—all begun before 1900—have become scientific research and educational institutions of no mean power. Collectively they occupy buildings that have cost above \$30,000,000—seven times what was invested in them at the turn of the century. Their collections have grown vastly, and their publications if brought together would occupy hundreds of feet of bookshelf. Their attendance reaches an aggregate not far short of 10,000,000 visitors a year. Meanwhile, from beginnings made since 1900, have come a dozen other strong museums—the most conspicuous in Los Angeles, Cleveland, Newark, Rochester, Denver, and Santa Barbara. During the same years special public museums of anthropology have grown up in Los Angeles, San Diego, New York, and Santa Fe.

This picture of institutions becoming strong, without a great many new museums being founded, is significant. It suggests that public science museums are in their natural role as great centers of research and educational influence, and that the service they are able to give locally is not likely to be provided in a great many other places. If means can be found for carrying the message of science to the people everywhere, they should be hailed with eagerness. This is not a sad advice to the going public museums. It is a glimpse of reality that can be helpful if accepted.

As a matter of fact, there is a new and promising agency of science education—the field, or trailside, museum—that is multiplying fast. It reaches people when they are on the move, without regard to the size of the place they live in. Also it promises to be taken up by the public

museums as an instrument of education for use with young and old around the home community.

**T**RAILSIDE MUSEUMS have become important almost suddenly. Their first forerunner had hardly appeared in Yosemite Valley when the movement began that became a widespread natural growth in only a decade.

The Yosemite Museum was started in a cabin by a park naturalist, Ansel Hall, in 1921; and there were then some exhibits in a log house at Mesa Verde, and a few things shown in the administration building at the Yellowstone. By 1923 Naturalist Hall in California and Superintendent Jesse Nusbaum in Colorado had given their museums formal standing and received gifts toward development. In that year the American Association of Museums became interested, and in 1924 it secured funds from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial to put up a building in Yosemite Valley and to look into what might be museum possibilities of national parks in general. From this beginning came the association's program of outdoor education. In 1933 the association's report summed up: "It was nine years ago that the committee began its work in Yosemite National Park. Since then eight trailside museums have been completed under its auspices: at Glacier Point and in the Valley of Yosemite, at Bear Mountain in the Palisades Interstate Park, at Yavapai Point on the rim of the Grand Canyon, and at Old Faithful, Madison Junction, Norris Geyser Basin, and Fishing Bridge in the Yellowstone. Meanwhile, following these examples, similar structures have been constructed under other auspices in other parks—national, state, and local. Now, at the end of nearly a

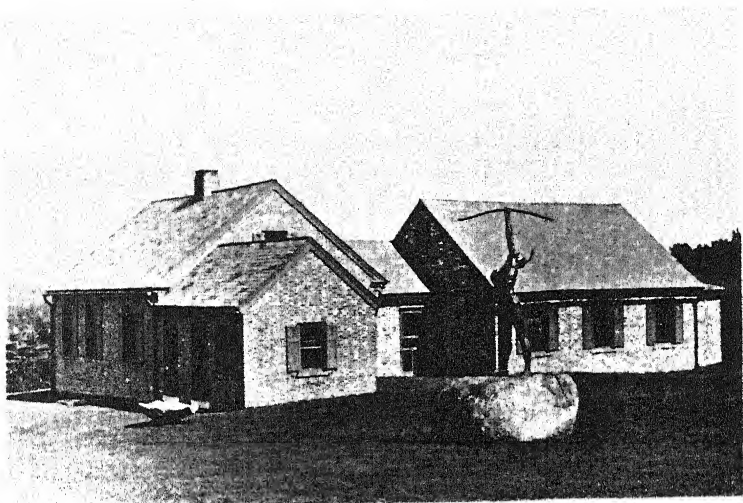


decade since the Committee on Outdoor Education began its work, the idea that the out-of-doors is itself a museum—rich in exhibited material—has become fixed in the public mind.”

Hermon Carey Bumpus, as principal in this program, gave time and genius for a decade, becoming the father of museums in national parks. Rockefeller foundations gave nearly a quarter-million dollars.

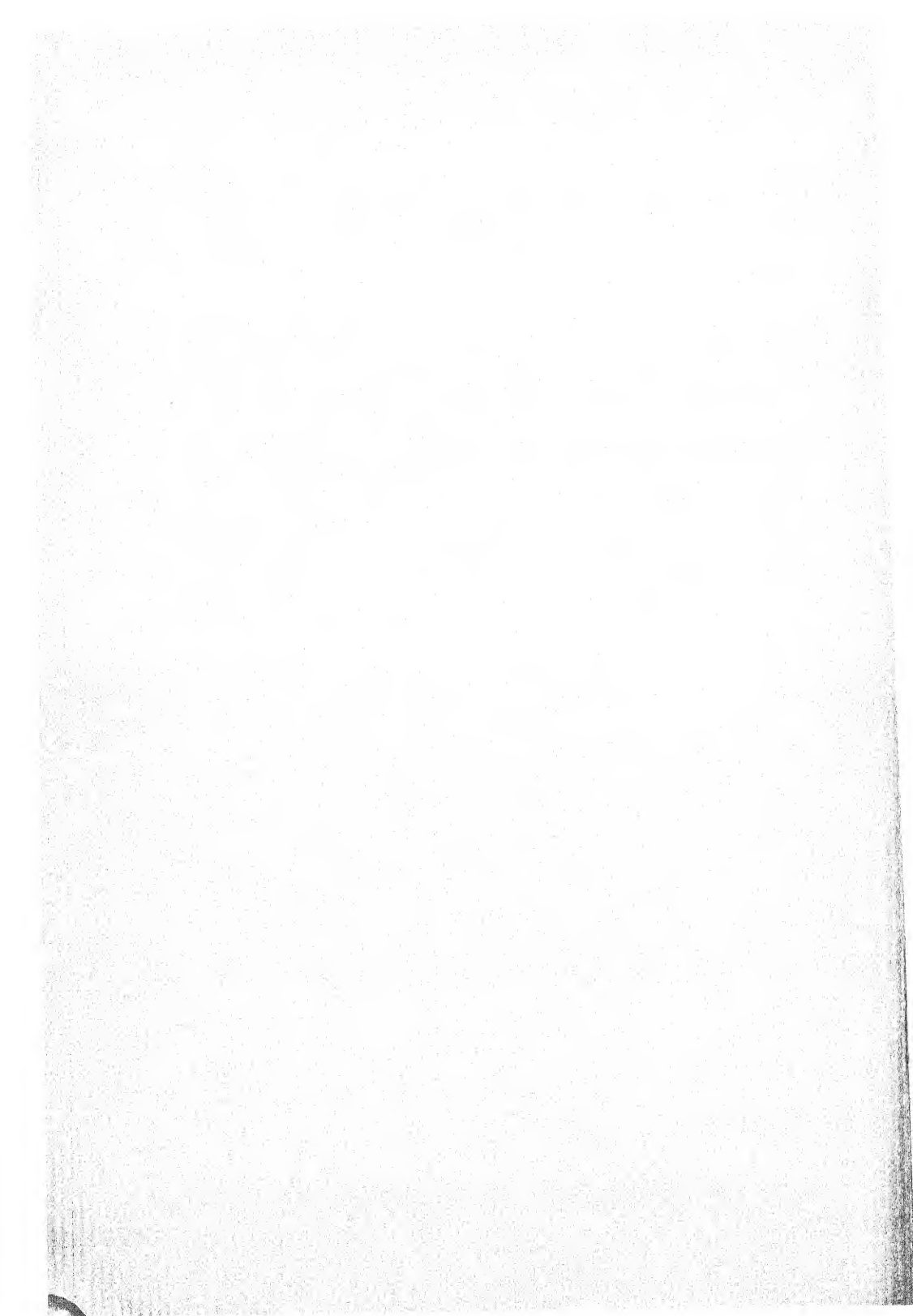
These beginnings have led to extensive results in the last few years. The federal government has already put in about two million dollars for buildings and exhibits. There are now about 40 trailside museums in parks and other areas under control of the National Park Service. Scores are projected, and it seems likely that each national reservation will have a museum or system of museums in time. The over-running of this movement into state parks is now well under way, and is especially important because there are so many areas of this kind. Several parts of the country have made a substantial start—Wyoming and South Dakota, Kentucky and Georgia, with as much earnestness as New York and other well developed states.

The term *trailside*, coined by Bumpus, suggests picturesquely that museums of this kind are field museums. Their essential character is that of being located where circumstances offer a subject to be explained, where nature provides an exhibit of earth formation or wild life, or man has left an archaeological or historic site. Strictly, a trailside would be found along a trail; but the name is given loosely to any museum conceived in the spirit of the field, devoted to the site or area it occupies, having exhibits that are only supplementary to the master display lying outside its walls. Besides typical trailsides like Old Faithful's museum of geysers and the big tree museum in Mariposa Grove, there are synoptic



WAYSIDE MUSEUM

HARVARD, MASS.



park museums like the one at Yosemite and the less formal summer camp museums in Palisades Interstate Park; and there are lookout museums like the one on Grand Canyon's Yavapai Point. Some term like *field museum* may later come into use, but for the present these museums are trailsides. Although, properly, every such museum is local in scope, there are some that show very little humor for the locality. For example, there is a museum in the presence of a volcano, that shows chiefly wild life. Also, there are *general* collections of pottery in several trailsides at archaeological sites of the West. These are denials of the plain and commanding opportunity to stick to what is most important on the spot.

The spirit of trailsides cannot be confined. It touches many small museums that would not have been thought of as trailsides a few years ago. Thus there are museums in the desert, as at Globe in Arizona and Twenty-Nine Palms in California. And there are several wayside museums along the open road, widely scattered from New England to the Southwest. The influence is pervasive, making even some public museums in small places construe their duty in terms of the local field.

But the clearest and most moving effect upon museums in cities is seen best at Cleveland where the Cleveland Museum of Natural History has a system of branch trailsides in surrounding city parks—branches to which the museum's educational program is decentralized in summer. In Massachusetts, the Springfield Museum of Natural History has had a similar branch in Forest Park since 1931. The next important development is very likely to be the widespread adoption of trailsides for use in this way by the public museums in big cities.

In time, the trailside museum as we know it today—the embodiment of an idea in its first simplicity—will doubtless blend with the public museum itself, giving

rise to a whole series of forms that take their nearness to nature and their singleness of interest from the little field museums, and their administrative traditions from the great museums. This will not prejudice the future of true trailsides, with parks as their natural haunts; but it may give a type capable of multiplying independently in the environs of communities. If the stimulating contribution of the trailside can be thus absorbed, the science museum movement should gain new vigor, and then there would be hope for a science museum near every small city and town.



## MUSEUMS OF HISTORY

### CHAPTER III

**L**OCAL HISTORY is the chosen province of most history museums. State museums attempt more, but state history—like national history—as presented by exhibits is a reinterpretation of material that in the first instance belongs to some local scene. History museums keep very close to their collections, and the division of material among them is avowedly geographic, each museum laying claim to what belongs near at hand.

The spirit in which local history is approached by museums is close to that of the modern historian, interested increasingly in culture history. Scholarly interest has shifted during recent years from political and military affairs, from the lives of leaders, to the life of all the people. This is reflected in books on history by increased attention to objective evidence; witness the treatment in Schlesinger and Fox's *History of American Life Series* (Macmillan) which includes parts, in volume after volume, referring to collections. In thus using museums, history students are taken out of conventional abstractions; for museums collect not religion but things of priests and worshipers, not government but things of governors, and, if it be of war, not battle but things of soldiers. Materials brought together thus have implications cutting across the traditional lines of interest in them; they tell a story about how people lived, though they may be consulted as records of army, state, and church. Even biographic material is transmuted little by little into culture history material as personal associa-

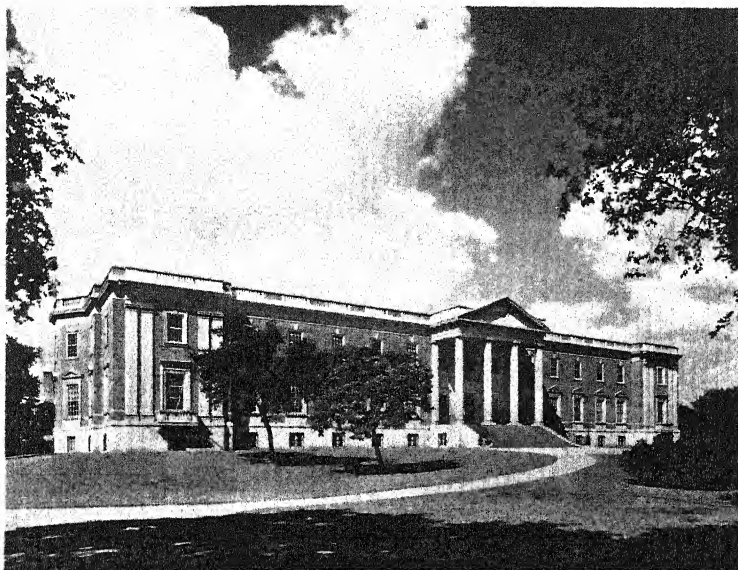
tions grow dim and the nature of the objects themselves is left in relief.

Most history museums require some anthropological material to represent the red man's part in the story of the white man. However, this does not call for systematic collections that should be in a science museum, or for a great array of artifacts, prehistoric and historic. Local archaeology and ethnology—quite as much as the broader treatments of these fields and of society's evolution—are for science museums to deal with, although some general museums (nominally of history perhaps, but really of history and science) do good work in these fields.

ONE PURPOSE animates museums of history. This is to recreate the past in the minds of the living. Any history museums that are themselves dead are victims not of their concern with the past but of their unconcern about the present.

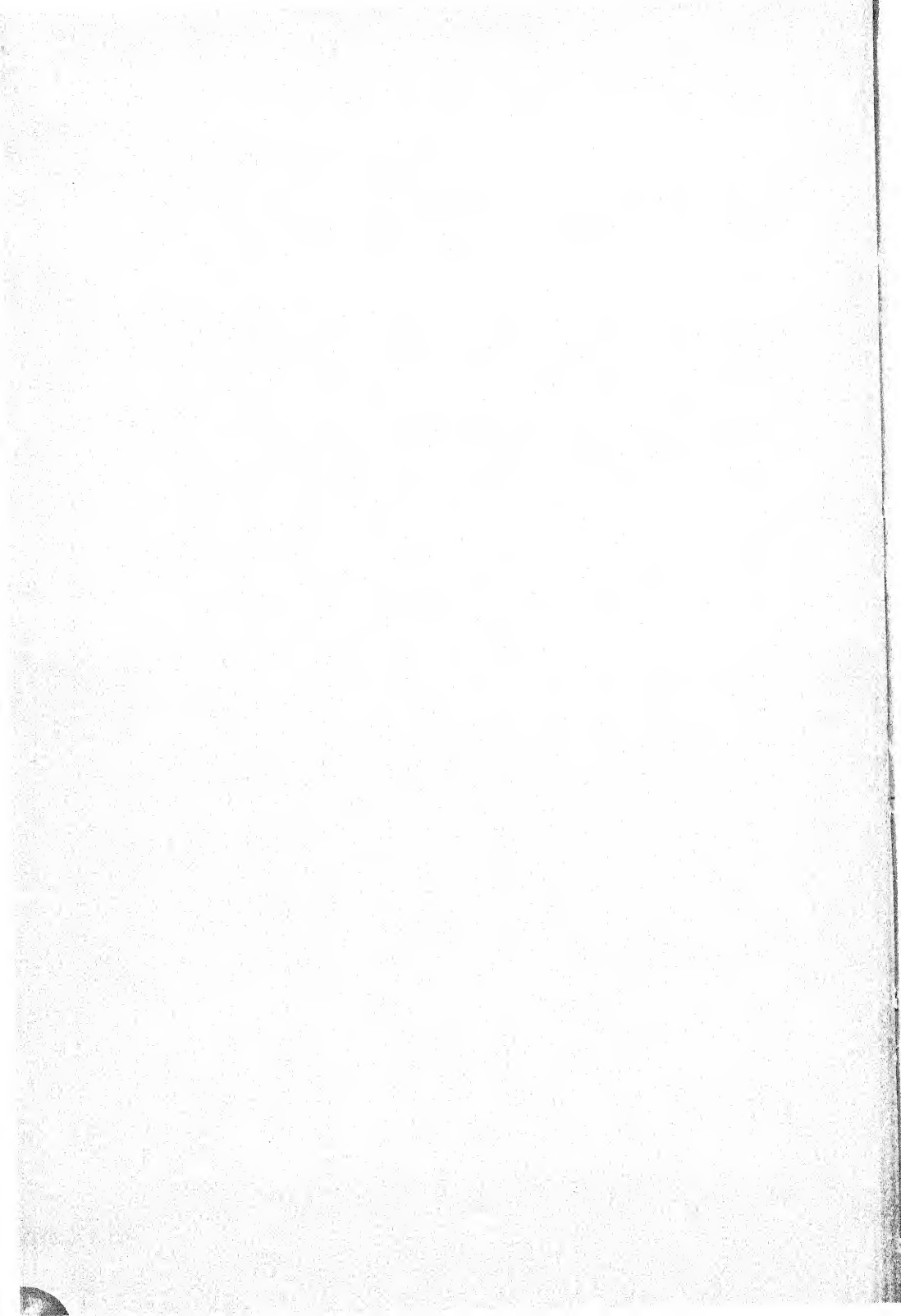
The responsibility to the living carries an obligation to teach only the truth. Training in citizenship and moralizing from the past for the future are foreign to this duty. Suggestions along these lines, found often in writings, are like the idea that art of the past is of value through offering old patterns for our copying today—a totally wrong idea. Such ideas overlook the importance of background in education. They represent the view that the past, if not to be forgotten, must be used for putting on a revival.

The real purpose of history museums is to spread knowledge about how things were, so that one may understand how they came to be. To one who knows this, the present sings in tones that do not fall upon the common ear.



*Photo by Hedrich Blessing Studio*  
CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CHICAGO



THE GREATEST NUMBER of museums in any field is that of 1235 for history (Appendix U). The different categories making up this total are easily defined if one first counts together all the historic house museums, regardless of their form of control. Of these there are 644 (Appendix O).

The next largest group, numbering 358, is made up of public museums and historical societies (separate lists in Appendix B). There is not as much reason for lumping museums and societies in the field of history as there is in other fields, because so many of the 300 historical societies are very small. Also these societies have found an alternative line of evolution that promises to become the usual one; this leads not to public museums but to historic house museums. About 100 societies have already taken over old houses, and all but a few of them now make the care and interpretation of these houses their entire work. Many new societies go directly at this, but also there are old societies into whose lives the change entered late—after 60 years for the Staten Island Historical Society, after more than 25 years for several others. Whether the role of public museum will be able to claim many more societies in the face of this greater and apparently more natural attraction remains to be seen. However, development from historical society to public museum does occur. One of the best examples is offered by the Chicago Historical Society, which is now a strong public museum with a modern building, important collections, good exhibits, an educational program, and a professional staff.

Special history museums often cause confusion by seeming to call for separate subject categories. There are museums of crime, religion, golf, free masonry, and the history of practices from pharmacology to road building; also there are societies specializing according to



some context of the locality—on whaling at New Bedford, glass at Sandwich, numismatics at New York. Such special museums contribute to the best definition of history as the full record of human affairs. They form no separate classes. Among them also are some establishments inspired by wars—most of which are run by veterans and their sons and daughters. These include six Confederate memorial museums, of which all but two belong to Daughters of the Confederacy. (Incidentally, daughters of various kinds—of the American Revolution, of Utah Pioneers, of the Republic of Texas—are responsible for many historic house museums in connection with which they do a most useful museum work.)

Besides the house museums and the public museums and societies, there are 233 history museums of other familiar kinds. About a third of them—nearly all special—are in colleges and universities (Appendix K). Schools have only three. States have only ten, but most of the general state museums include history; and there are 32 state historical societies (Separate lists in Appendix G). Among park museums, 16 are historical—trailside museums of history (Appendix P). The nation's principal history museum is part of the general U. S. National Museum at Washington—besides which there are three small national museums of history (Appendix H).

Finally there are several private museums (Appendix L), and company museums (Appendix M), and more than 70 sub-museums under various kinds of parent organizations (Appendices Q and R).

It would not mean much to determine how many communities have public history museums, because so many small and inadequate organizations are involved. More places have history museums *of some kind* than have science or art museums, but very few places have *good* public history museums.

**H**ISTORICAL SOCIETIES are often fired upon by critical marksmen, but the shooting is bad because the target is blurred. Known as historical societies, are clubs, museums, libraries, and establishments that combine the attributes of these three in about every possible way. The club features are juvenile characters that may be cast off, but the museum and library features develop as a society matures.

Both the book-gathering and the object-gathering tasks are accepted by most societies, although several state societies, and a few others, have definitely gone over to library work. The state societies get a library bias from their responsibility for government documents, but museum work has a way of getting the upper hand in time, so that societies with any museum development at all are likely to be known as museums—an outcome favored also by the fact that museums of all kinds properly have reference libraries. There was a time, some years back, when it appeared that historical societies as a class were destined to be libraries, not museums; but this is no longer so.

As in museums of other kinds, there is need for getting the exhibition and library functions into yoke. Each branch helps the other within the institution, and educational work can be based upon both the exhibition halls and the reading room. Just as exhibits should be weeded, so the library of an old society should be weeded under this plan; geographically irrelevant material and categories like genealogy can be sent to libraries where they will be used more and sometimes bring in return volumes needful to the work with exhibits.

*Certain common failings* are evident among the local and county societies that have made museum beginnings. These are products of the amateur regime that still persists in this field. The usual explanation is that without

money one can do little, but the fact is that money usually comes when a society is ready for real change and its officers make progressive efforts. This is very different from wanting more money to spend in the same old way. Laying the difficulty to the smallness of the town, as many do, is not convincing; museums can prosper in small places; and, besides, many of the weak societies are not in small towns but in big cities. Several societies that already have buildings and endowments are among the worst.

The trouble, really, is with people. Most society trustees take their responsibilities very lightly, and many who are in earnest seem unreceptive to influences that might help. Their isolation springs often from the belief that the home society is "peculiar," different from others, unable to benefit by outside experience. This idea—a defense, at bottom—is incredibly persistent. Then too, the person in charge is commonly not equal to the job on account of age or other limitations. It should not be surprising that museums in such hands are bad. The one remedy that will do much good in such a case is change of management; and, happily, this remedy is taken, now here now there. Improvement comes slowly and haltingly, but surely.

However, the worst mistakes could be avoided even by inexperienced people. *Meddling with natural history* is one of these mistakes. Historical societies have no business collecting animals and plants with the idea of recording the "history of the environment." This was well enough a century ago when historical societies had not yet found themselves and were thought of as academies responsible for all of knowledge. The Massachusetts Historical Society gave up natural history in 1833, and many others followed suit in time; but even in 1934 one state historical society reported that "... the work has

followed the same routine as designed by its founders, namely collection and preservation of unwritten history and pioneer relics, and insofar as possible, striving to obtain specimens of rare fossils . . . which give us knowledge of the prehistoric within our State." Paleontology—like zoology, botany, and geology—is an affair of science museums.

*Collecting souvenirs* is another mistake—a result of primitive naive sentiment that values a fragment for its mystic relation to the whole. Most societies indulge to some extent in this, but here speaks good sense through a publication of the society at New Haven: "I seriously question if mementos and souvenirs have any real historic significance. We have pieces of wood from practically every boat that was ever built. They do not seem particularly instructive and certainly do not lend themselves to attractive display. If they are interesting at all it is as specimens of wood of a certain kind of a given age. That a particular piece of wood was a part of an historic episode seems to me of little or no significance." This is correct, of course.

*Taking everything offered* is still another common mistake. Not one historical society in ten has the self-respect to run its own life. Fear moves most societies to accept whatever is dumped upon them. The trouble always goes back to trustees and officers. They should lay out a plan (with advice as required), and have stamina enough to stick to it even though people who would like to domineer may be disappointed in this way.

Finally, *showing everything* is also a common mistake. Few historical societies have adopted the scheme of filing away most of their material, with data, for reference. A study collection is one hallmark of a sound museum.

Despite the large number of old and retarded societies, the founding of historical societies cannot be looked upon

as an activity of the past. Two out of every five societies now existing have been started since the World War. In New England—where “old home weeks” marking 200th anniversaries of towns have been leading to historical societies for a century—founding kept up steadily until restimulated by the first 300th anniversary in 1920. Meanwhile, the West had long since taken up the idea as some of its towns reached their first hundredth year. National historical observances have been followed always by waves of new societies, and this was true for the whole country after the Washington Bicentennial celebration in 1932.

**PUBLIC MUSEUMS OF HISTORY** number about 60—not counting even the advanced societies like those of Chicago, New York, and Buffalo which are really public museums too. Going by name alone—since the line between museums and societies is not otherwise well defined—the nominal museums differ typically from the nominal societies in the same features that characterize science museums. They are public institutions, with diversified income as a rule, controlled by trustees, and run by experienced people. Examples are the little Neville Public Museum at Green Bay, the vast Edison Institute at Dearborn, and the Museum of the City of New York. Most of the history museums date from the last two decades; but one of importance with a long career is the Essex Institute at Salem, Massachusetts, that grew out of the earlier Essex Historical Society.

Not more than two score public museums (first list of Appendix B) are concerned with the broad field of history even for their localities. This does history little justice. The situation is somewhat relieved by the fact that



some 50 general public museums have history departments that are stronger on the whole and broader in scope than most of the history museums themselves (examples at Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Rochester, Oakland, Erie, and Three Oaks), but even with these additions the total of good history museums is very low. There is need for more institutions of this type to be established, without regard to existing small historical societies which seem to have a destiny of their own in connection with old houses.

With exceptions—a few notable exceptions—the history museums have not given much attention to improving their methods. Some should even be enjoined to observe the elementary suggestions offered for lagging historical societies, and many of them should define their aims more clearly, reorganize their exhibits, and develop educational work. Guides to these ends are already in print—Arthur C. Parker's *Manual for History Museums* (Columbia University Press, 1935), and Coleman's *Manual for Small Museums* (Putnam, 1927).

**H**ISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUMS number 644—counting a group like Spring Mill Village or Williamsburg as one—and they are multiplying faster than museums of any other kind. House museums are widely distributed over the country, with concentration areas on the East Coast and good showings in Indiana and several nearby midwestern states, and in California. Only one state—Nevada—seems as yet not to have any at all.

These museums have a manual of their own (Coleman's *Historic House Museums*, American Association of Museums, 1933) which portrays the type as a little institution devoted to the care and interpretation of a house or public

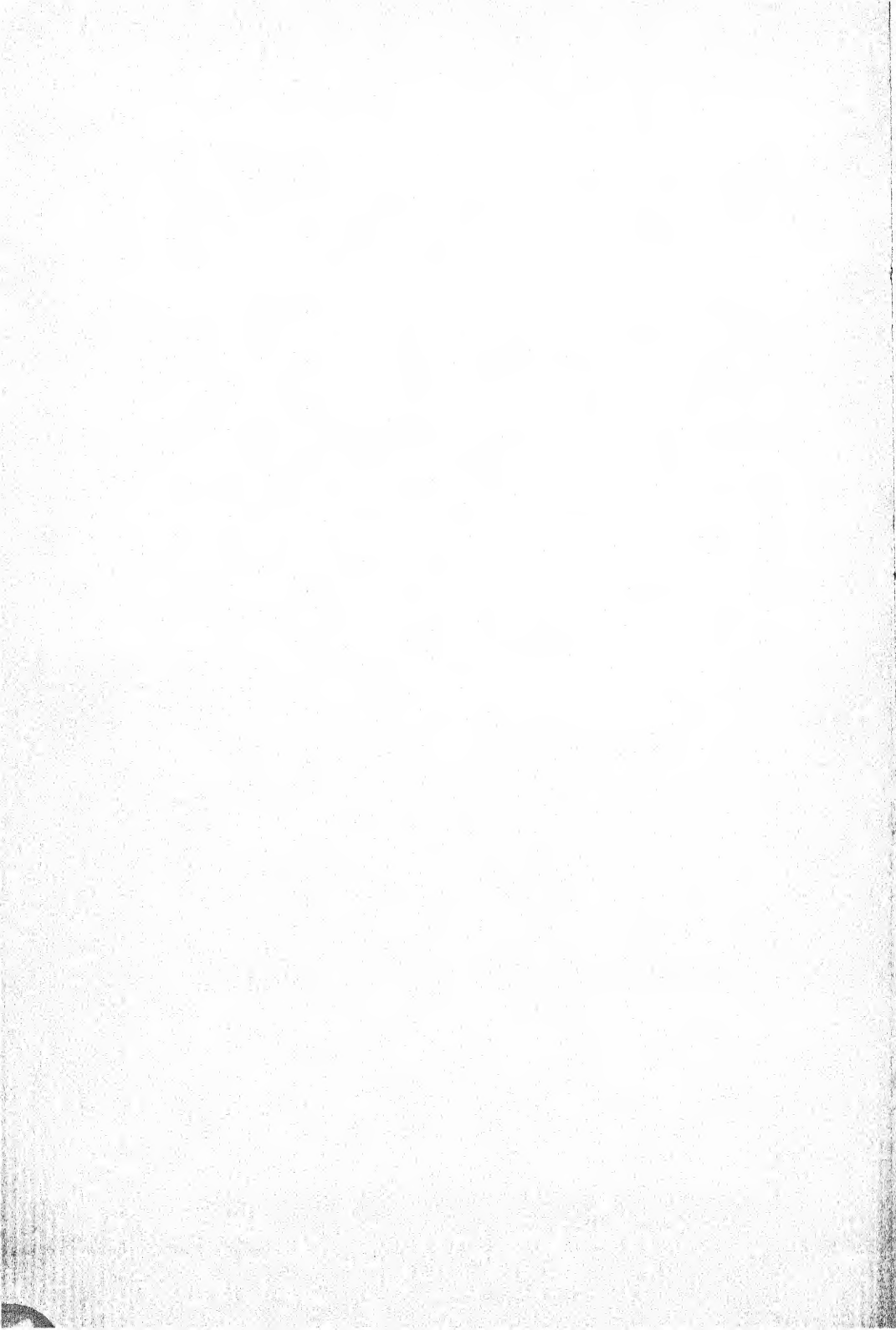
building preserved for its age or its associations—a place that has ceased to be a home, a tavern, a town hall, a church, or whatever it was at first, and has become an exhibition place for the public to see as a survival from the past. The house is furnished in keeping with its period and history. It is never—save through mismanagement—cluttered up with exhibition cases and other formal exhibits, as then it would not be a museum of this kind but only a makeshift shelter for some other kind of museum. Any collections relating to the history of the house that are not suitable as furnishings are kept in a “museum room,” and this nucleus often develops the need for a supplementary museum building put up as a subordinate unit nearby, and serving also as office and library quarters. The house itself may be more or less restored. People are attracted to it by devices of publicity and road marking. Visitors who come are guided by an instructor who explains the house and its history. Methods for doing all these things—restoring, furnishing, forming and caring for supplementary collections, attracting visitors and instructing them—are set forth in the indicated book. Also there are chapters on administration, financial methods, and other similar matters that therefore need not occupy us here.

Each good historic house museum is specialized in its collecting and instructing. If the house is biographic or has figured in some important event, its specialty is closely prescribed. If it is just an *old* house its specialty is that little part of American culture history to which the house closely relates; in a home there would be shown the domestic life of such people as occupied it; in an apothecary shop, some of the pharmacy of the time; in a barn, the agricultural life of the spot; in a town hall, the local government. Each specialty tends to be of one particular time and place.



*Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Irving Fairbanks*  
**AT THE FAIRBANKS HOUSE**

**DEDHAM, MASS.**



There are many violations of these simple principles and they should be discouraged by all possible means. Historical societies that go over to the house museum type should weed their general collections ruthlessly, giving away or otherwise getting rid of what is irrelevant. Exhibits that are not furnishings should be segregated. The specialty of the museum should be clearly defined, and the person in charge should try to become an authority in the chosen small field. These ends will be approached by degrees as people who have had the sentiment to protect old houses acquire the needed insight into how to use these houses for the public good. At present many historic places are very badly used.

The ownership of a historic house has much to do with its safety and permanence, and is of great moment. About 70 houses regularly open to the public are owned by individuals. This is hazardous—although, to be sure, it is no more precarious for an individual to own an *open* house than a *closed* historic house. One is likely to forget how many thousands of places worthy of being preserved now have no greater safety than is provided by the whims and the fortunes of the people who own them.

Of the remaining 570-odd houses, in the hands of organizations, more than a quarter are owned by historical societies (158 houses owned by about 100 societies). Typically, each society has just one house—the Portsmouth Historical Society with its John Paul Jones House in New Hampshire for instance—but some have several houses, and three of them (Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Society for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, and American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society) have chains of scattered houses. Patriotic societies, notably of Daughters and Dames, own about 60 open houses—subordinating their own use of these properties to the public interest. Special groups,



existing for the one purpose, own about 90 houses more—the Gore Place Society with its Gore Place near Watertown, Massachusetts, for instance; sometimes the group is a board of trustees, like the board of the Ropes Memorial at Salem. Various other societies, clubs, and organizations with varied interests are the owners of another 60-odd houses.

Government ownership accounts for more than 200 houses—29 under the nation, 100 under states, 70 under cities. Counties have only 5. A great many of these properties are administered under a plan of cooperation between public authorities and an organization of one of the kinds mentioned above, acting as custodian in immediate control. This is an excellent plan. Government ownership provides security of title, combines conservative supervision with capacity for adjustment to changing conditions, and gives some promise of continuing public support; and a good custodian society takes infinite pains with its house.

National ownership is a new and important development. The U. S. Department of the Interior is now making a national policy for historical conservation (Chapter VIII), and through its National Park Service the department is surveying historic sites and houses with the idea of acquiring title, through gift or otherwise, to properties that have strategic relation to the main lines of American history. The Colonial National Monument in the Jamestown-Yorktown area of Virginia, and the Morristown National Historical Park in New Jersey are the best known among a dozen federal preserves containing historic house museums. The Park Service, though prepared to administer its properties ably, is not unmindful of advantages to be gained from cooperation with state and local organizations, and thus its work should help to further the advantageous dual plan.

State ownership, though widespread, is well developed in only a few states. New York has the longest experience and owns the largest number of houses; its central supervision is under the Department of Conservation which has a council made up of regional park representatives (house properties are rated as parks) and state history and museum authorities; custody of the houses, in most instances, has been assigned to local societies or boards. California, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Ohio are also well advanced in this work—the first three by direct management, Pennsylvania partly under the custody plan, Ohio through its state museum. Kentucky has appeared on the scene quite recently with historic house museums in a dozen state parks.

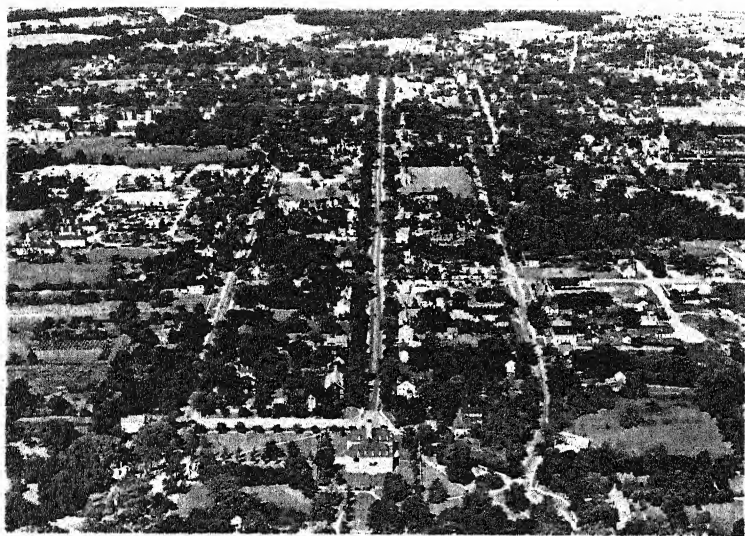
City ownership, though not unlike state ownership in principle, is less satisfactory in practice because city administrations, being close to their houses, are tempted to run them, and in doing so they often show the weakness of political appointment. However, some cities call on local organizations to act as custodians—a role in which public museums as well as historical societies are well qualified to serve. The Philadelphia Museum of Art is custodian of several city-owned houses, known as the Colonial Chain, in Fairmount Park.

*Preservation and restoration* of old houses are matters of technical method; but there are some related questions of principle that are of general concern.

Restoration is work for a specialist, but all too often it is undertaken by builders, amateurs, or architects who give little time to inquiry but just go ahead—destroying evidence that might enable students to restore with fidelity. Often it is better to preserve than to attempt restoring at all, since additions to very old houses, like the remodelings of medieval 17th century houses to meet the new classical styles of the 18th century, are themselves

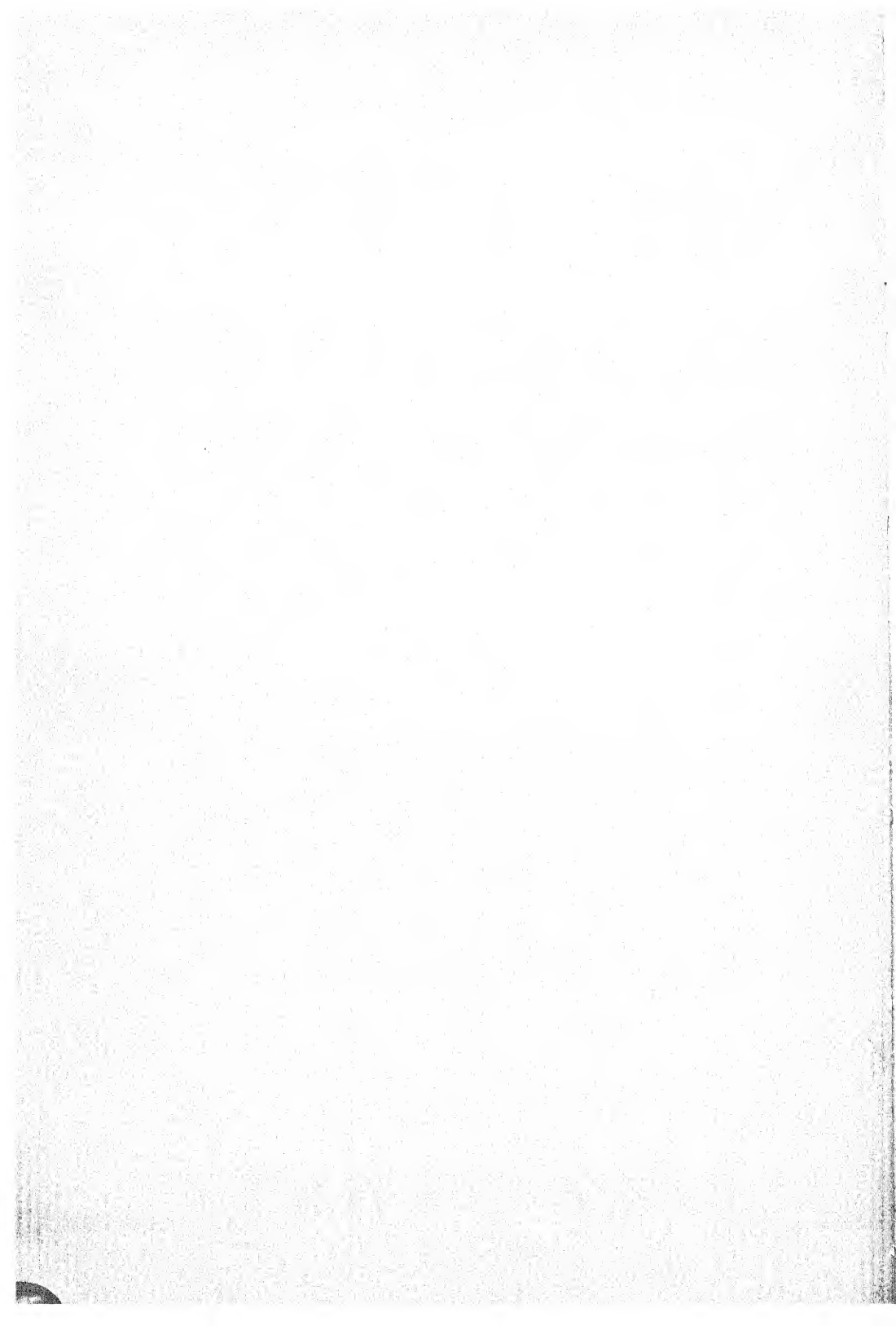
of interest. Disfigurement, like the carpenter's insults laid on Bacon's Castle in Virginia or the top floor of the Paul Revere House before Boston fixed it up, should certainly be removed; but, in general, preservation is safer than tampering—especially in these careless times when one thinks nothing of creating a whole historic house just as the forebears should have seen it.

Tolerance for the new creation of "old" houses has crept upon us. The first innocent step was the careful restoring of lost parts for which there was evidence, and the replacing of materials where original work had become dilapidated. Then it was but a step to making equally careful entire reproductions; and that left only the further venture of producing, from incomplete data and finally from *no* specific data, what had been lost completely—creating "types." The Puritan village built at Salem in 1930 was an effort to show types of 1630; a group of cabins put up recently at Lockport, Indiana, is typical of the period when Lincoln lived in the district; the rendering of a house at Washington's birthplace is a representative Virginia house of 1715. These are but examples of much that is being done at present. They represent the attitude of the temporary exposition expressed in permanent form. It is useless to complain; faking, whether scholarly or ignorant, will continue until the thirst is quenched—after which some of the fabricated houses will come down. Meanwhile, every influence should insist that houses be marked accurately and ineffaceably to show exactly what they are. It is almost incredible how much can be expunged from everybody's memory in a few years, and how soon an error can crowd out truth. It seems likely that some day a common question for antiquarians will be over the authenticity of old houses—as to whether they are genuine early houses or forgeries put up in good faith during the first half of the 20th century.



*Photo by A. L. Dementi*  
COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

VIRGINIA





In view of our current laxities, it seems strange that the transporting of houses should be under ban. Fortunately it is. Many houses have had to be moved a short distance, perhaps from the right of way of a new street or the site of a modern building to a nearby park. But very few are the houses that now stand entirely out of their historic settings; and nearly all of these few are in one place—Henry Ford's artificial Greenfield Village at Dearborn, Michigan. To be sure, in Scandinavia and Holland there are "outdoor museums," like the famous Skansen, with houses brought together from different parts of small countries, but that plan has not appealed to us; the United States embraces too many radically different settings and such variety of local materials that house-gathering is insupportable. Our people seem able to visit historic houses wherever they stand. America's 644 scattered historic house museums are collectively her Skansen.

Many *groups* of houses have been saved on their original sites. Spring Mill Village, a deserted Indiana settlement of a dozen houses reclaimed by the state, is now a museum village. Several pioneer strongholds, like the walled settlements of Sutter's Fort at Sacramento, of Fort Michillimackinac on Lake Huron, and of Fort Niagara on Lake Ontario, have been restored. Economy, once a Harmonist settlement, is preserved in the heart of Ambridge, Pennsylvania. There are the mission groups of California, Texas, and Arizona—some in lay hands, some still places of worship as well as of visitation. But the grandest constellation of museum houses is Williamsburg—entire 18th century capital of Virginia, recovered through the weeding out of 300 modern buildings, the restoring of more than 60 early structures that remained, and the reproducing of more than 70 others including the colonial capitol, court house, governor's palace, gaol,

and two taverns. Here research, supported by the munificence of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., has made the most extensive and important of all historic house museum groups. The example of Williamsburg should stimulate others to save some of the ghost towns of the mining West, some of the best preserved older communities, like compact and venerable Deerfield in Massachusetts, and some of the southern plantations. This should be done soon, while there is still opportunity.

The old house movement appeals to the public more widely than any other branch of museum work. It has been possible to save at least one structure every fortnight, on the average, for many years. Whatever the vagaries of the moment may be, this is a strong and wholesome enterprise in which thousands of people are earnestly occupied as amateurs and workers. People are becoming better informed every day through extensive publicity and the visits they make to houses that are open. Mount Vernon alone has half a million visitors a year, and the dozen next most popular places raise this annual attendance figure to a million. What is needed now is a relaxation of the provincialism of many responsible groups so that all historic house museums may be brought into step with the best thought and practice of the movement.

*Houses to be saved* are everywhere. The number of them shrinks as old houses disappear, and it grows as new houses little by little get old. What is an *old* house? The common notion that nothing built after, say, 1830 is worth keeping, overlooks the fact that the people of 1970 will be entitled to know how the people of 1870 lived, and we might spare them the trouble and the sin of making replicas from photographs. No house is unworthy of preservation if it is a fair representative of its time. The had taste of one period will be no less historic than the

good taste of another. One should be tolerant of a jerry-built house or a vainglorious house of 1870—even though not as concerned about it yet as one should be about a sturdy house of 1670 or a stylish house of 1770. Each represents a chapter worth recording.

Many houses should be saved for their associations, without regard to their age or architectural style. States and the nation are especially busy, at present, deciding what historic events and personages should be commemorated in this way. Historic associations give a powerful hold upon public interest, and sometimes comparatively trivial associations can be the means of saving a house that has lasting value as an architectural example. The future will decide whether our emotional reasons are sound, but even if they are not, at least they can serve the purpose of adding to the heritage of houses.

All the houses that have been saved so far make but a very incomplete collection. New England has more than 75 museum houses of the 17th century, but the Middle Atlantic States have only 11, and the Old South only six. Except for the Missions, the West has saved only a couple of examples from the period before the day of pioneering from the East. The Middle West has saved only half a dozen pre-Revolutionary structures of any kind. At the modern end of the series the collection is scanty, too. Although the Mississippi Valley has saved more than 100 houses dating since 1830, New England, the Middle Atlantic States, and the South have less than 20 each. West of the Mississippi there are only 30-odd museum houses of the industrial period.

How house collecting can go on as it should without discovering some new source of financial support is difficult to see. Even federal and state governments are accepting properties cautiously, in part because they could so easily run up heavy administrative burdens.

Admission fees play a larger part in the affairs of historic house museums than of public museums, but fees are not always proper under government control. Possibly a tenant plan can be devised for general use; removal of legal difficulties, if any, might well have early attention. Some houses owned by organizations are now rented to desirable tenants as a means of keeping them up. The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities has followed this plan in several cases—the houses being open to visitors or only on inspection from the outside, as the case may be. At Williamsburg, only a few of the restored houses are open for inspection; others are occupied under proper restriction. Among newly saved houses, here and there, at least a score are similarly let by organizations. The plan seems to be regarded as only temporary—a sort of administrative first aid—but it has more than emergency value. For agencies that own or intend to own several museum houses, the rental plan might amortize initial outlay, as the toll plan does for a new road or bridge. Through revolving funds, created or at least kept up in this way, the problem of how to save houses when they fall suddenly under threat of demolition would be partly solved.

Cities can help the movement by legal protection through zoning. This will be more and more important though at present only about one-fifth of the museum houses of the country are in places of more than 50,000 population. Such zoning is easiest to adopt in places where there is an old quarter with attraction for tourists, but protection is needed wherever much of the old remains in the midst of the new in cities. Charleston and New Orleans have already given attention to this duty.

Charleston has a section called the Old and Historic Charleston District established under Section 42 of the

Zoning Ordinance of 1924. Application for a permit to build within this area must be made to the City Board of Architectural Review which issues a certificate of appropriateness if exterior features subject to public scrutiny are approved. The board is made up of five members appointed by the City Council on nomination, from their own memberships, by several organizations—the American Institute of Architects' local chapter, the Carolina Art Association, the City Planning and Zoning Commission, the American Society of Civil Engineers' local chapter, and the Real Estate Exchange. This law still needs strengthening. It blocks any construction that would hide or deface old buildings, but it does not prevent a building from being demolished.

New Orleans has its Old Quarter or Vieux Carré which is now protected under an amendment of 1936 to the state constitution providing for a Vieux Carré Commission of nine members—one each from candidates recommended by the Louisiana Historical Society, State Museum, and New Orleans Association of Commerce; three local architects recommended by the American Institute of Architects, and three other residents of the city. On recommendation of this commission the City Council can exempt historic structures from taxation provided the owners agree not to alter or demolish the properties without approval for a term of years, and it can acquire houses by purchase. New construction is closely supervised as to appearance, color, texture of materials, and architectural design of exteriors. In the Vieux Carré are included the Cabildo and other buildings of the Louisiana State Museum, which sponsored the amendment.

Such developments—useful on their own merits—are important also as contributions to a sentiment that must become established if the public is to support the conservation policy of the nation (Chapter VIII).



**F**IELD MUSEUMS, or trailside museums, of history are of recent origin. The ten on battlefields, five of which are preserved as national military parks and three as state parks, and the six others in national and state control (Appendix P) have all appeared—in their present character—during the 1930's.

To call these museums *trailsides* is a stretch of the term, but they are of the same essential nature as the science trailsides in national parks and elsewhere. Each is located where its subject matter belongs and is subordinate to the eventful site itself. Each is closely circumscribed in subject. A typical museum of this kind is in the Vicksburg National Military Park, Mississippi (*The Museum News*, April 1, 1937, pages 7-8).

The principal interest of these museums—in particular of those created by the National Park Service—to museums generally, is that they make their exhibits recount the story they have to tell instead of letting the message rise, if it can, out of such exhibits as are usual in history museums. This is a two-edged sword. It sets an excellent and much needed example of purposefulness; but also it may lead to excessive use of models, diagrams, and charts. It will be a task for these museums to keep from being large-scale illustrated books, shown page-by-page under glass. Unless this can be avoided, history trailsides will be little more than awkward and ineffective reading rooms. The problem is a serious one; industry museums are running upon it also.

## MUSEUMS OF ART

### *CHAPTER IV*

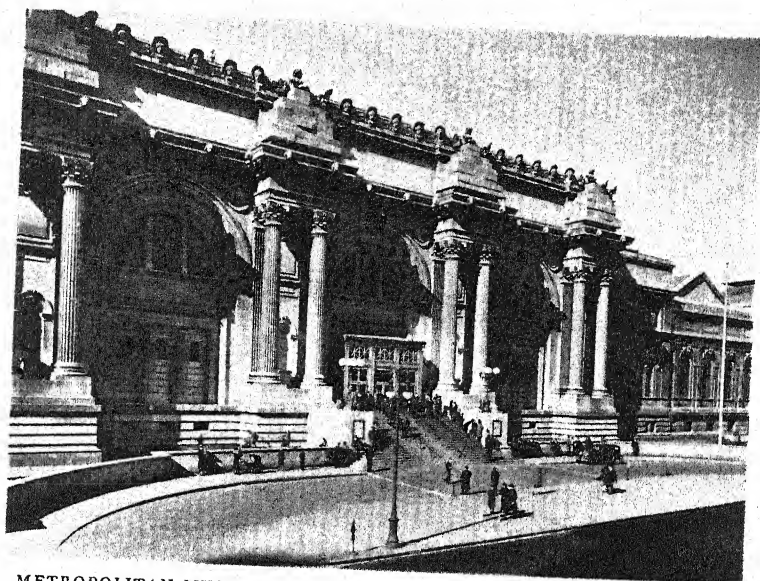
**A**LL THE FINE ARTS seem destined to have equal place in art museums, where traditionally only the graphic and plastic arts have belonged. Music has already established itself, and now drama and the dance are getting hold.

Evidence is seen on every hand. The Milwaukee Art Institute outlines a program of music, dramatics, and dancing to develop city support. The Worcester Art Museum, like several other museums, has a music record library. The Joslyn Memorial at Omaha gives an hour of music daily. The Toledo Museum of Art, with a concert hall in its new building, makes a special feature of music appreciation and has classes in listening for young and old—11,000 young people attending their part of the offering in a recent year. The Dayton Art Institute gives courses in music appreciation. The Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, holds a Brahms Chamber Music Festival. Concerts and recitals are given by more than a score of museums—those of the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art the best known. The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center has a music hall, music rooms, and a model theatre—and uses them. The Cincinnati Art Museum offers a series of recitals on the history of the dance. The Brooklyn Museum has extensive dance activities as well as work in music. The Wadsworth Atheneum, with its affiliated Friends and Enemies of Modern Music, opened the Avery Memorial building in 1934 with performances

of an opera that went from there to Broadway; and since then the museum has sponsored the Hartford Festival of Music. The Carolina Art Association reawakens the Dock Street Theatre in Charleston. Chicago's Art Institute has had its Goodman Memorial Theatre since 1925. Now there appears a book by Arthur Prichard Moor (*The Library-Museum of Music and Dance*, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1938) urging the establishment of museums of music and dance and calling these subjects to the further attention of all art museums.

Music projects of the federal government have helped museums by providing orchestras, but interest in music is not new. Even in the last century recitals were given in museums; and by 1918, when the Metropolitan Museum began its concert series conducted still by David Mannes, several museums—those of Chicago, Cleveland, Toledo, and Minneapolis among them—had already launched concert or recital programs.

However, the present widespread and varied efforts in the "fine and lively arts" of music, drama, and dance are of the last few years. They are part of a transformation—the art museum becoming an art center for actual public participation in art, as well as for passive looking on. We have long had art in the head; now we are beginning to get it in hand—and on foot. Says a news notice of 1937: "The Brooklyn Museum dance center, which began last year with an exhibition of the dance in art and a series of dance recitals, has this year expanded its program. . . . Free demonstration groups under direction of professional dancers will give group members opportunity in the museum to see whether they have a taste or talent for modern dancing; and endeavor is made to refer interested members to schools of dance outside the museum." This turn of affairs can be expected whenever an art that produces no tangible object is taken up; the



METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

NEW YORK





spectators have to join in to keep things going after the professional is through. "The giving of concerts is not enough," writes the director of New York's Federal Music Project (*The Museum News*, March 15, 1937). "The museum should carry this beginning much farther, for audiences want something more. . . . In New York City, 10,000 adults over 17 years of age are learning to play an instrument purely as an avocation and at the same time are learning how music is made. . . . The museum has but to capture this newly created or newly discovered music public. Psychologically it is just the place. . . . Experiencing music in its relation to other arts has been given little thought, but this is the whole trend. . . ."

Activity programs have been growing up for a long time in the traditional museum subjects. So well has this sort of thing become established that there is now very extensive museum work in amateur painting, drawing, modeling, and crafts. At present, however, there comes an actual realignment of art museum aims—a realignment in recognition of the fact that *art is doing something*. Until that idea could be accepted, only those arts that gave inanimate "works" could find place in museums. This does not mean that the museum is confusing its role with that of the art school. The task of the school is to train professional artists; that of the museum is to aid appreciation and to give art something of its normal place in the life of the grown-up who is not an artist, and in the life of the child.

What then *is* an art museum, one may ask. Is it an institution that collects objects and uses them in various dignified ways; or is it an arena for amateurs? It is destined to be both—*is* both, already.

The real question now is whether the two different roles will tend to differentiate museums of two classes—

the collectors of objects and the leaders of people, with scholarship given to the one and recreation to the other, and with education divided between them according to its nature, and theirs. Such an outcome would be reasonable, but it seems unlikely except in the sense that certain great museums will have the more important collections and will lean towards scholarly pursuits, while many smaller museums without the chance to be great for what they own, will be important for what they do with their public through leadership in all of the arts.

One effect of the change is to bring about a further increase in the number of *small* art museums. There may soon be a growth of such museums out along the highway and at resorts—where science and history museums have already developed in highly significant new forms. The recent multiplication of summer theatres tells of forces that can propagate summer recreational and educational institutions of other kinds.

It is surprising to find these new vigors in the camp of the *fine* arts, directly following a time when criticism directed at art museums has been partly for giving too much attention to painting and too little to art in its applied branches.

THE DECORATIVE ARTS made their way into museums against a current of opposition that ran strong in the first decade of this century—about the time the Metropolitan Museum took its first long step into this field by acquiring part of the Hoentschel collection, through the Morgan gift of 1906 setting up a Department of European Decorative Art. But, aided by the longstanding influence of craft museums in Europe, these arts were soon solidly in American collections.

About twenty museums have acquired important representations of the decorative arts of the past. New York and Boston, with vast resources, have also built decorative arts wings of their buildings; and these and many other museums have installed French, English, and American period rooms. Several collections have some special strength, as that of Boston in textiles, but as a rule the resources spread more or less evenly over ceramics, enamels, metal work and glass, textiles and costumes, woodwork and furniture.

In dealing with these materials, art museums have come to recognize what they owe to history—the duty of portraying the culture of peoples through their arts. To accept this duty is to subordinate the history of painting or sculpture to the history of man as revealed through these expressions. In a practical way this would mean at least rearrangement of displays, new labeling, and different interpretation. Also it would mean much broadening of collections. The culture history principle is finding acceptance slowly but surely. It does not quarrel with the aesthetic purpose of museums, for that touches only the choice and the enjoyment of individual objects. The new aim affects the whole order of things. Under its influence, largely unsuspected, old categories of fine and decorative arts have been disappearing in the organization of both collections and staff; and in their places have come the categories: arts of Egypt, Greece and Rome, the Near East, the Far East, Europe in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and modern times, and America. It is for other chapters to trace the further workings of this influence.

The most conspicuous gap among the arts has been left by giving aboriginal art of the New World to the anthropologist. To be sure, the University Museum at Philadelphia long ago set an advanced example by deal-

ing with ancient arts of Mexico, Middle America, and South America on equal terms with those of Egypt, Babylonia, the Mediterranean, Palestine, and the Orient. And a few other public art museums have paid fair attention to the Indian's work—the Denver Art Museum for some time, the Brooklyn Museum with emphasis, of late the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, and the new Philbrook Art Museum at Tulsa. But only now are many beginning to fill the gap in earnest.

**D**EALING WITH THE PRESENT gives art museums a lot of difficulty. But the problem is less obscure than it is sometimes made to seem.

Although industrial and commercial arts touch present-day life most intimately, contemporary painting is what is usually meant in speaking of contemporary art. For painting, the difficulties growing out of abundance of material and uncertainty as to what is good have been partly solved by loan exhibitions—helpful, however, only insofar as the loan exhibition problem itself can be looked upon as solved (Chapter XVI).

Art museums recognize the duty of buying from artists as they can. But what they can do is never up to what the artists think they should. The policy of buying current work *freely*, with the idea of sorting it down freely in time, has not been put into practice; and if it were it would still be hopelessly inadequate. Even so liberal a policy as that of the Addison Gallery, which reserves the right to sell; or such expenditures as those of the Whitney Museum, with its large purchase fund, and the Metropolitan Museum, with its Hearn Fund, can do no more than build up a scanty collection as the moving present

becomes the past. For their own purposes most museums prefer to wait and, later, either cater to popular interest as it rediscovers movements and artists, or wait again until outgoing fashion hands down to public collections what incoming fashion has bought for patrons' homes. It is in the very nature of things that, *so far as buying is concerned*, museums must deal principally in the past. Even New York's Museum of Modern Art, dedicated exclusively to the present, cannot buy extensively since to do so for long would give it so large a stake in the past that it would become in spite of itself what many another museum already is by intention. Its only hope is the temporary show of objects borrowed, and in that medium its interest has marched ahead far from French painting of the 19th century, with which in 1929 its work began. Similarly small museums, chiefly through loan exhibitions, are able to have a fair measure of influence in the contemporary field.

But all this ignores the matter of whether art museums *should*—even if they could—take so large a hand in direct patronage as to support artists. Obviously they should not. One might as well expect museums to serve as the principal customers for fine jewelry or the best in textile design. However, indirect patronage through influence on the public should be pushed to extreme. In this sphere lies the museum's greatest duty to living artists. Buying and finding purchasers is but a trivial matter by comparison.

In respect to industrial art, the situation is curiously hedged about. Although art has almost its only broad contact with modern life through industrial and commercial applications, museums generally are giving only occasional and reserved attention to these fields. The first moves were made about twenty-five years ago. At that time Europe's idea from the 1850's, that industry



had espoused ugliness and that museums should carry on with good taste by preserving the older craft objects, was still strong. So it was jolting, in 1912, for the New-ark Museum to bring over the water an exhibition of contemporary European work in ceramics, glassware, textiles, and printing. The Metropolitan Museum took a long step in 1915 when it held its first industrial art exhibition—a special exhibition of textiles, “to inform the manufacturers and designers of textiles what a large supply of historic and documentary pieces is at their command in New York City.” In 1917 it followed with an exhibition showing the ways in which the museum’s collections had been used by designers; and similar, more important, shows have been held at intervals ever since. Meanwhile industrial art exhibitions have been brought together by several national organizations and shown in a dozen or more museums, including those of Philadelphia, Detroit, Cleveland, Baltimore, Minneapolis, and Worcester. In 1933 the Museum of Modern Art had a largely abstract exhibition of machine art, and several others followed with shows that included almost anything from an automobile to a can opener. There have also been exhibitions, partly historic, of special materials and techniques—most notable the Metropolitan Museum’s special showing of glass in 1936—and there have been several gatherings of cheap objects of beauty, like Minneapolis’ “Fitness for Fifty Cents,” following Dana’s example of a decade earlier. But in neither temporary nor permanent exhibits does modern industrial art get the attention one would have predicted for it a decade ago when Charles R. Richards made a study, for the American Association of Museums, of industrial art museums in Europe (*Industrial Art and the Museum*, Macmillan, 1927). So moving was the subject then, that Richards even considered whether separate museums of industrial art might appear in this

country. He concluded that art museums had already too large an investment in applied art collections for a split to be possible, and thought that the need would be met fully by existing art museums.

Programs of educational work in industrial art are gaining ground with the consumer, but only holding ground with producer and merchant. The Metropolitan Museum began its formal efforts to assist manufacturers, designers, and trade journals before 1918 when the ending of the War gave new attention to taste and style in industry. This work led to a Department of Industrial Relations ten years later, and other museums have since made efforts along the same lines—notably at Buffalo where the Albright Art Gallery now has a Department of Allied Arts and Industry, giving courses in design as applied to home furnishings and dress for employees of department stores. But not more than three or four other museums have taken steps of any consequence in this direction. The growing side of the work is in relation to the public. Many museums are giving courses for the purpose of training consumers to buy. However, if the museum art schools would follow the plan proposed by Arthur Pope in *Art, Artist, and Layman* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1927) and would devote themselves generally to the industrial arts—as Chicago's school is doing in part—there would be a reaction among museums, and applied art would have a more important place in their scheme.

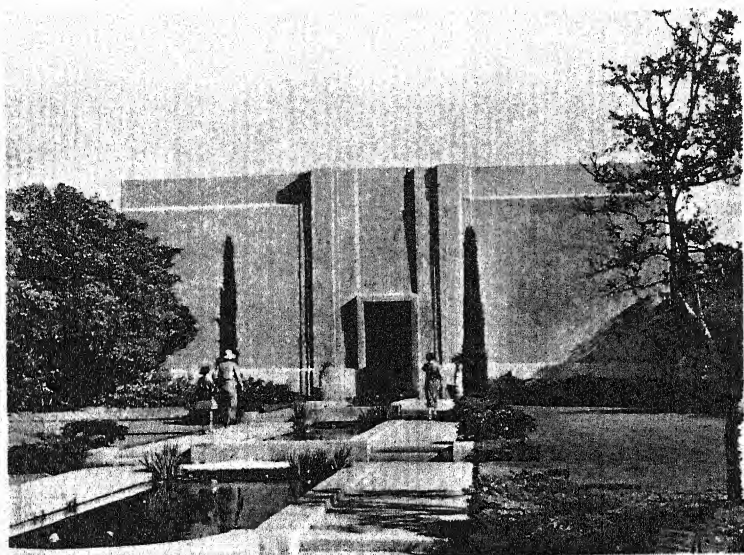
Now a new, related interest is awakened by the Museum of Modern Art in giving attention to cinema art. Through its Film Library, established at New York in 1935, this museum is now preserving representative motion pictures of all types and is making them available for study. It has brought together retrospective series of films that are lent for educational programs on the history

of pictures in America and abroad. In the season of 1937-38 these projectable exhibits—the only treatments of cinema art to be had—were circulated to 175 institutions including many museums. The Film Library also gives a course on the history, art, and technique of the motion picture for the fine arts department of Columbia University. Its example has touched other museums, notably the Cleveland Museum of Art which of late has lectures, courses, and facilities for study of motion picture art. This development may find much in common with the new interest in drama among museums, after it has passed beyond its first absorption in history and technique.

OF THREE AIMS—the aesthetic, the scientific, and the practical—long recognized by art museums, much has been written. Benjamin Ives Gilman's statement of "The Triple Aim of Museums of Fine Art" in *Museum Ideals* (Cambridge, 1923) is still good; but emphasis is laid so differently at present that it often seems as though actual changes of purpose had appeared.

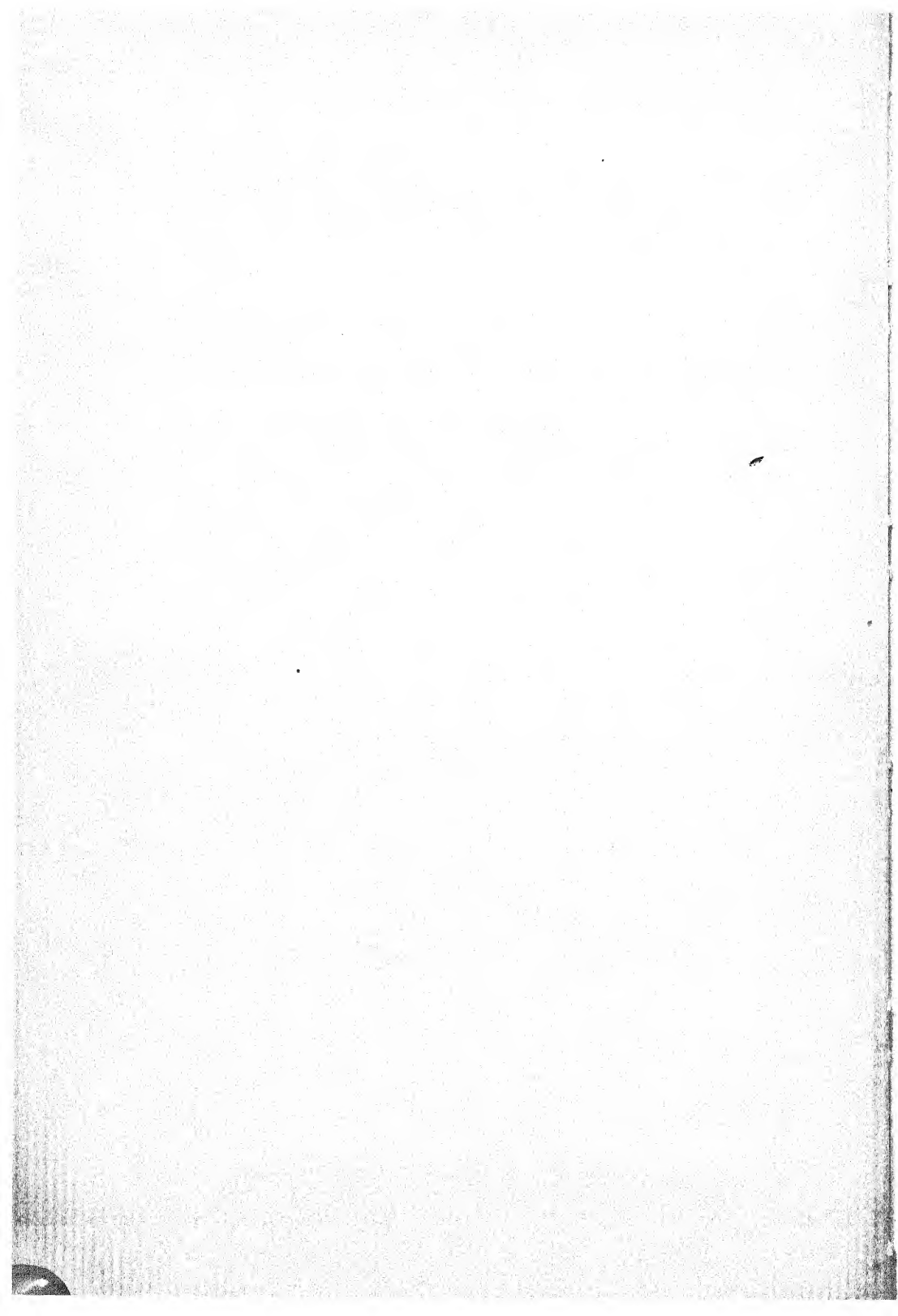
The aesthetic aim is first. Formerly it was held by a professional cult as a sort of mystery, but now it is taken for granted. Good critical ability is required of a curator as his first qualification, and the public is led to appreciation through educational effort. There is not much left of the old obscurantist attitude that employed good taste as a screen for poor scholarship and a protection against the need for thinking clearly or teaching at all. So marked is the change that some have actually taken it to be a passing of the aesthetic aim, although in fact it accompanies a surer entrenchment of that purpose.

The scientific aim has come into a great deal of notice



FAULKNER MEMORIAL ART GALLERY

SANTA BARBARA





during the past decade. Technical methods have been developed for the examination of art objects—a branch in which Harvard's Fogg Art Museum has pioneered, making matters of observation out of what formerly posed as solely matters of judgment. Archaeologists have added to the knowledge of the past, and culture history has come to be a subject for extended study. These developments strengthen the scientific role, and so there are those who would give the scientific aim a place above the aesthetic aim. This thought is misguided. Science has all it can do in its proper second place, and even there it has not yet been fully accepted. Only a few art museums have formulated sound objective programs; and many museum people, even among the younger men, still hold half-baked conceptions of the scholarly role and are relying for prestige more upon social strategy than upon any real authority in their field.

The practical aim gave very high hopes when it was first defined, and some museums did lead in a practical way up to the time that industry's own initiative and the influence of commercial window display overtook them. Now the practical aim has found its place toward the rear. The museum's growing influence on the public, in pursuit of its first two aims, serves the end of the third aim indirectly.

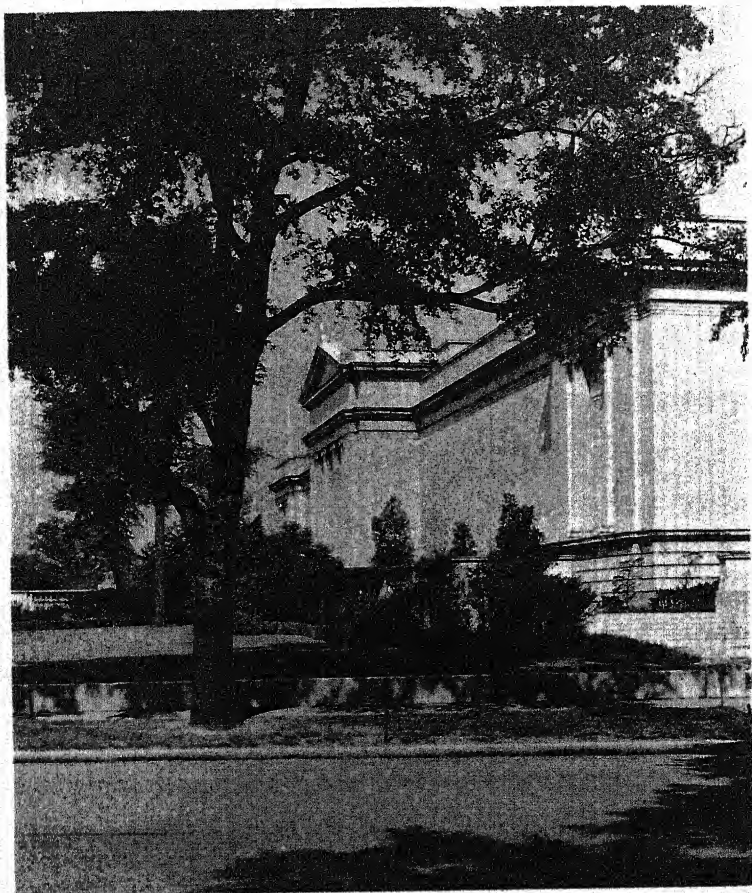
The art museum's methods with the public—its ways of carrying out its three aims—have changed greatly during recent years and continue to change. Although many museum boards still linger in the socialite spirit of yesterday, the narrow conception of the institution's place is passing. Thousands of interested and influential people now recognize that the art museum is an establishment for all, bound to carry out its aesthetic and scientific aims by educational methods. Those who

censure the museum for narrowness are unmindful of the long way trustees have come.

In this change, the public has also had a part. The old religious idea of art as wrong and the pioneer attitude toward it as contemptible have been thrown off, and everyone can now share in what was reserved not long ago for the exceptional few. Art has ceased to be the affair of the artist and the rich man. "I cannot say that we have actually seen the fine arts in the United States swing from oligarchy to democracy in ten years;" said Frederick P. Keppel in 1935, "but I can say that oligarchy was the word that naturally came to mind ten years ago and that democracy is the word one thinks of today."

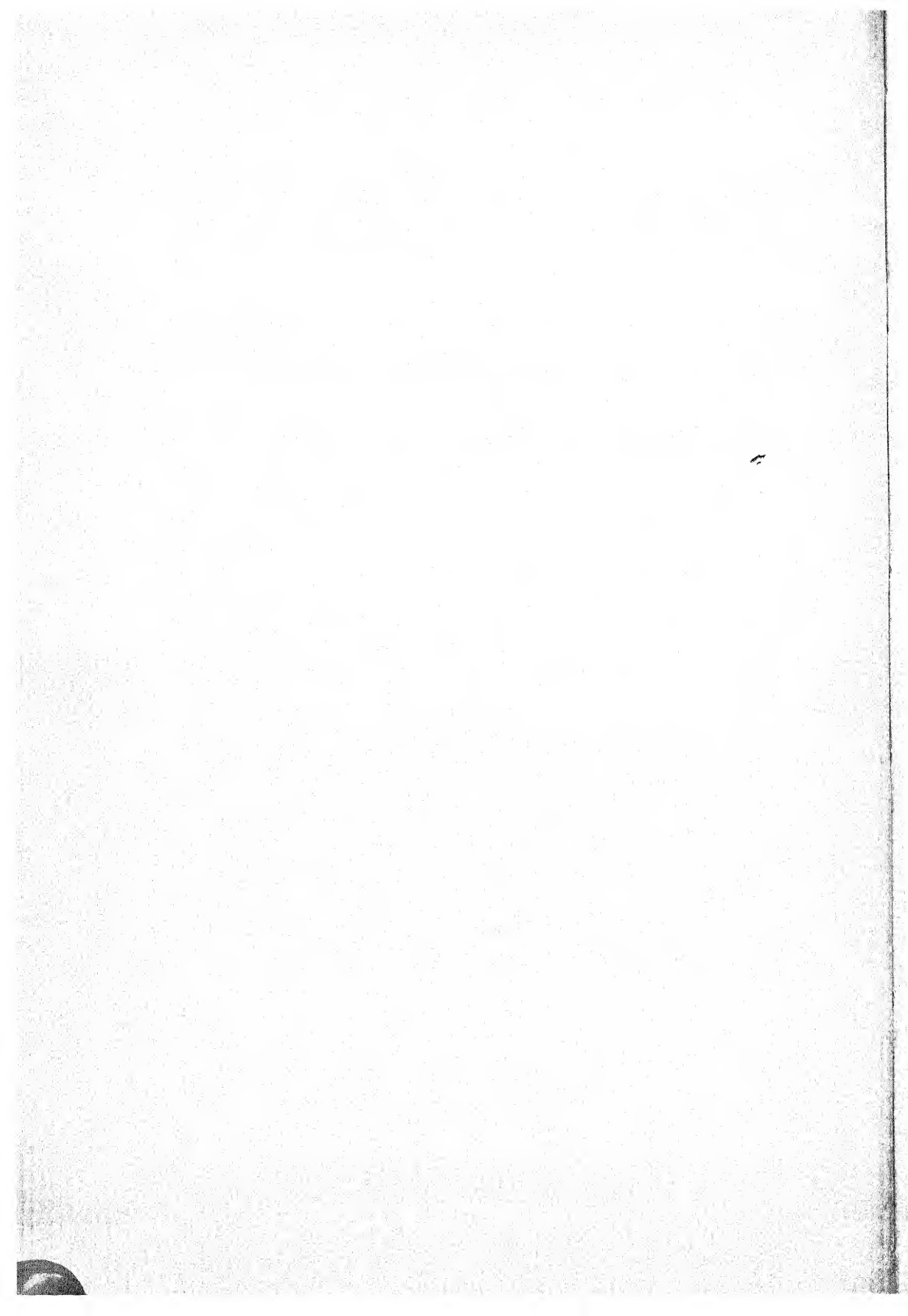
**S**WIFT DEVELOPMENT has marked the career of art museums. Philadelphia's Academy, Yale's Gallery, and Hartford's Atheneum have come down from the dawn of art collecting before the middle 1800's, but the first appearance *in numbers* was much later and almost sudden. Jarves could say in 1870: "We cannot speak of art museums as a matter of fact in America;" but in the very next decade Cesnola wrote: "already the influence of the museum in America is world wide." Now, only 50-odd years later, we see a development of 387 art museums, the best of them viewed by the world with some awe for their active usefulness to the people and respected for the wealth of their collections.

The total number is made up principally of 224 public museums (Appendix A) and 115 college and university museums (Appendix K). Of other kinds (Appendix U) there are not very many. Whereas art is much weaker than science in number of college and university museums, it is stronger than science in number of public museums.



CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

CLEVELAND



Comparison with history is difficult because history has so many very small establishments. But measured by eye, so to speak, art is by far the best developed museum field.

The number of 224 public art museums does not give the number of *localities* having art services. Forty-odd museums double up by locality, but offsetting them are 40 general public museums with strong art departments. A score of college museums serve their communities; and a couple of state art museums, like that of Virginia, are in a way local museums. Thus more than 240 communities are accounted for.

Of these communities, the 180-odd that have regular public art museums show an interesting range of size—interesting in view of the common belief that museums are large city institutions. If a population of 100,000 be taken as the division between large and small communities, then only 63 large places have art museums against 119 small places. There are 87 places under 50,000 population, 62 under 25,000. These counts lose a good deal of force when the number of large places is compared to the much greater number of small places, just as in the case of science museums. But counting incipient art museums, in the form of local art societies or associations that may grow up to be public museums, would multiply the number of small places many times. This is another reminder that society museums are no longer of a separate class, as once they were, but are simply *young* museums. There seems to be no way to draw a sure line between the public museums and the hundreds of art societies (three out of five of them started since the World War) many of which have “the beginnings of a public collection.”

During the last few years the federal government has come on this scene, establishing art centers in many small



places especially in the South and the West. More than 40 centers have been set up under local committees where previously there were no art museums, besides others in more fortunate places. In one recent year the lump attendance was 1,300,000; and 220 people were employed. City governments, organizations, and individuals have contributed substantially to the expenses, supplementing federal emergency funds; and there is every likelihood that local interest in most of the places will later carry on.

Unlike science and history museums, with their new generation of little field museums, art museums are running true to type, promising to spring up everywhere in places large and small. The reason for this difference is not hard to see. Art museums, as now conceived, fit into the pattern of everyone's daily life. The world of nature is pushed ever farther away, but the world of art is brought ever nearer to the individual. It is not a pious dream that art can take an intimate place among us as it has among other peoples.

## MUSEUMS OF INDUSTRY

### CHAPTER V

THREE INSTITUTIONS make up a much discussed group of industry, or applied science, museums. They are the New York Museum of Science and Industry, the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, and the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia. Their importance is not so much from size (although the two last are very large) as from the fact that they represent a subject of great moment in the modern world.

All three are of recent origin. The New York museum was founded by Henry R. Towne, whose bequest of a provisional endowment of \$2,500,000 in 1924 brought it into being in temporary quarters three years later. In the meantime Julius Rosenwald had founded the Chicago museum to which soon he gave \$3,000,000 or more; and in 1933 this institution began making exhibits that would go into one of the largest museum buildings in the world—the Fine Arts Building of the exposition of 1893, reconstructed now through a bond issue of \$5,000,000 voted by the city. Beginning in 1928, a group in Philadelphia raised \$5,100,000 for the museum there, part of it to be a memorial to Benjamin Franklin, under the venerable Franklin Institute. This building was opened in 1933. Thus within a decade an outlay of more than \$15,000,000 was made for the three institutions.

There are other museums that are somewhat kindred to these. The Edison Institute at Dearborn, Michigan—devoted to the development of transportation, agriculture, and various trades and occupations—is concerned with

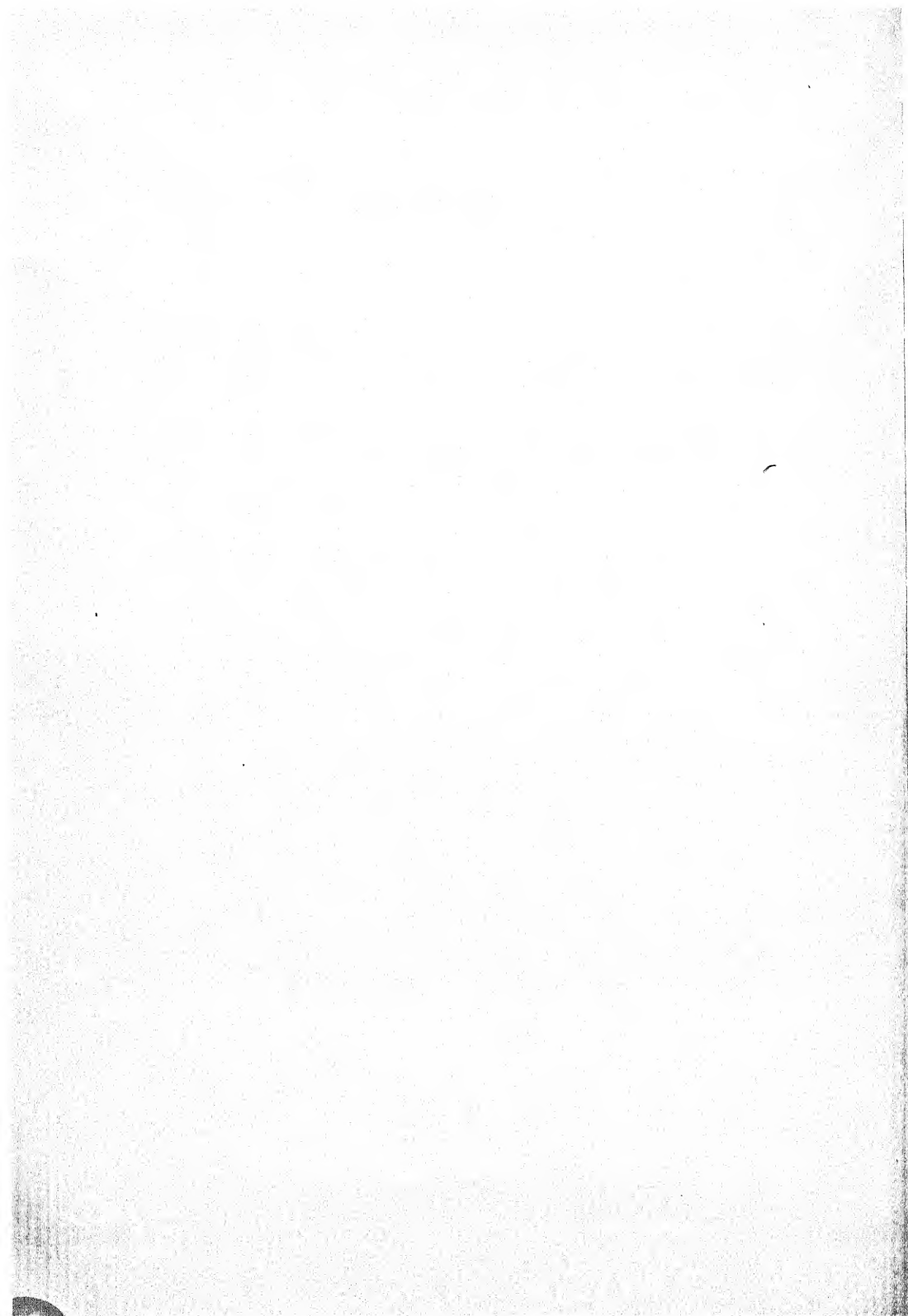
industry more as history than as applied science. Also chiefly interested in historical record is the National Museum's department of engineering and industries that occupies most of a building and a temporary structure at Washington. Two special museums of industry—the Army Aeronautical Museum at Dayton and the Grand Rapids Furniture Museum—might also be classed with history museums like the Mariners' Museum at Newport News, or (except for management) with some of the special museums run by industrial corporations. There are also some general public museums dealing with industry as well as with history, science, or art—most notably at Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, and Newark. And, finally, there is the Philadelphia Commercial Museum that, since 1894, has turned its attention to raw materials and international trade.

The inspiration for the three new industry museums that form a class by themselves was Europe's earlier achievements in this field—principally the Deutsches Museum at Munich, once the most talked about museum of industry in the world, and the well-known museums in Paris, London, and Vienna, and lesser examples in several cities on the Continent. The influence of these establishments came to this country by visits and a book. There are stories of how Rosenwald and his children were impressed by the Munich museum. Before that Charles R. Richards had studied the museums in eleven countries, on behalf of the American Association of Museums, and made a well-known report (*The Industrial Museum*. Macmillan, 1925). When the museums were forming over here, groups of their planners went to Europe for special observations; and from over there a number of times came dynamic Oskar von Miller, creator of the Deutsches Museum, who was well listened to as the leading exponent of industry museums.



NEW YORK MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

NEW YORK





AN UNFORTUNATE NAME—cumbersome, confusing, and inexact—is the name *museum of science and industry*. Though borne by only two museums, it has been publicised much and has come into some use as a descriptive term. *Applied science* would be accurate, and it may prevail in the end. *Industry*, though not really adequate, is well established in speech and writings; and it seems acceptable if only because it sets up no confusion.

The worst trouble about the term *science and industry* is its implication that two fields are covered. *Science* has come to mean pure science, and it describes the field of the natural history museums that are now taking in physical and chemical science as well. (To be sure Britain's national museum of industry at London is called the Science Museum, but that name is anomalous.)

The Chicago museum got its name, in 1929, not from London but from Chicago's Century of Progress Exposition that was getting ready at the time to make the partnership of science and industry its theme. The museum, dropping an earlier memorial name, took up the coming slogan. And soon after that New York too dropped its original name (Museum of the Peaceful Arts) and followed Chicago's lead.

THE FIELD of industry museums—the *application* of science in industry and other activities of man—is really part of the broad field of culture history. One can see why science, history, and industry go together naturally as subjects for some of the general museums. But industry, treated by itself as it is in the three new industry museums, becomes a separate field approached chiefly in terms of today.

It is a mistake to think that industry museums deal with applications of the *physical* sciences only. They concern themselves increasingly with applications of all the sciences, recognizing that biology is applied in forestry, agronomy, animal husbandry, hygiene, public health, pharmacology, and medicine, as truly as geology is applied in mining, physics in engineering, and chemistry in chemical industry. Only during their first few years were our industry museums strongly inclined towards the plan of those European technology museums that give applied biology little or no attention. Now two of them (New York and Chicago) follow equally in the steps of the German museums of hygiene and medicine; and the third (Philadelphia) is moving in that direction. Also there has now appeared the American Museum of Health—a special museum of applied biological science.

Although *pure* science is not in the province of industry museums, as a rule there are a few exhibits on the principles of science by way of introduction to exhibits showing how they are applied.

**S**Ocial PURPOSE has emerged in recent years from what seemed earlier to be the strictly technological role of industry museums. Writings of Richards—a pioneer in this field—recognized clearly the need for setting forth “social and economic implications of industrial progress. That this will be the most difficult task laid upon these new institutions is beyond doubt,” he said. “Yet it would seem equally true that without wholehearted endeavor toward this end, they will be left as glorified wonderlands, lacking the full educational message they should bring to our people.” (*The Museum News*, April 15, 1934). Interest in man and the social setting

also came to the surface at the Chicago museum. Says the museum's guide book of 1936 (*From Cave-Man to Engineer*): "The Museum will be concerned in its final form as much with man as a social being as with his scientific discoveries and his industries."

The pursuit of a social aim seems, in the last analysis, to make the industry museum possible. Until the broader purposes were formulated there was no essential difference between such a museum and an exposition. William Stanley Jevons, early critic abroad, saw this and was moved to condemn industrial museums on principle. He argued against "forming vast collections of technical objects, the value and interest of which must rapidly pass away. We hear it frequently urged, for instance, that a great industrial country like England ought to have its great industrial museum, where every phase of commercial and manufacturing processes should be visibly represented. There ought to be specimens of the new materials in all their qualities and kinds; the several stages of manufacture should be shown by corresponding samples; the machines being too large to be got into the museum should be shown in the form of models or diagrams; the finished products, lastly, should be exhibited and their uses indicated. It is easy enough to sketch out vast collections of this sort, but it is a mere phantasm which, it is to be hoped, it will never be attempted to realise . . ." ("The Use and Abuse of Museums" in *Methods of Social Reform*. London, Macmillan, 1883.) Jevons added that such a museum would become far vaster than a great exposition, and that it would be faced with the dilemma of either growing obsolete or else changing periodically and having the new crowd out the old and so reduce the museum to little more than a current shop display. Industrial corporations themselves have now found a way, through many separate

company museums, each to preserve a part of the record without running into difficulties of size; but the public museums are steering away from comprehensive collecting that would record fully the history of, say, machine design. Public museums of industry have not found the same need as other museums have for making systematic study collections.

Also, they are not much concerned with the *increase* of knowledge through investigation. They project no research functions like those of other museums. To take up this work would be to back away from the social aim and to approach industrial services in the realm of invention and management.

However, industry museums do go in strong for teaching, or the function of interpretation. This role will no doubt principally shape their destiny.

**D**ISTINCTIVE METHODS are used by industry museums in their exhibits. This is largely because they have ready at hand a most spirited means of teaching, which is demonstration. Their exhibits can work. Their visitors can press buttons and pull levers. And from such things it is but a step to motion pictures and phonographic talks. Finally, there are performances, such as a trip through the Chicago museum's coal mine where the guides have to carry spirits of ammonia for those who fall victim to illusions of depth and dangerous passage. These methods cannot be much employed by museums of other kinds. It is not a question of ingenuity but of circumstances. Industry museums represent a field of action, and they can interpret it through action.

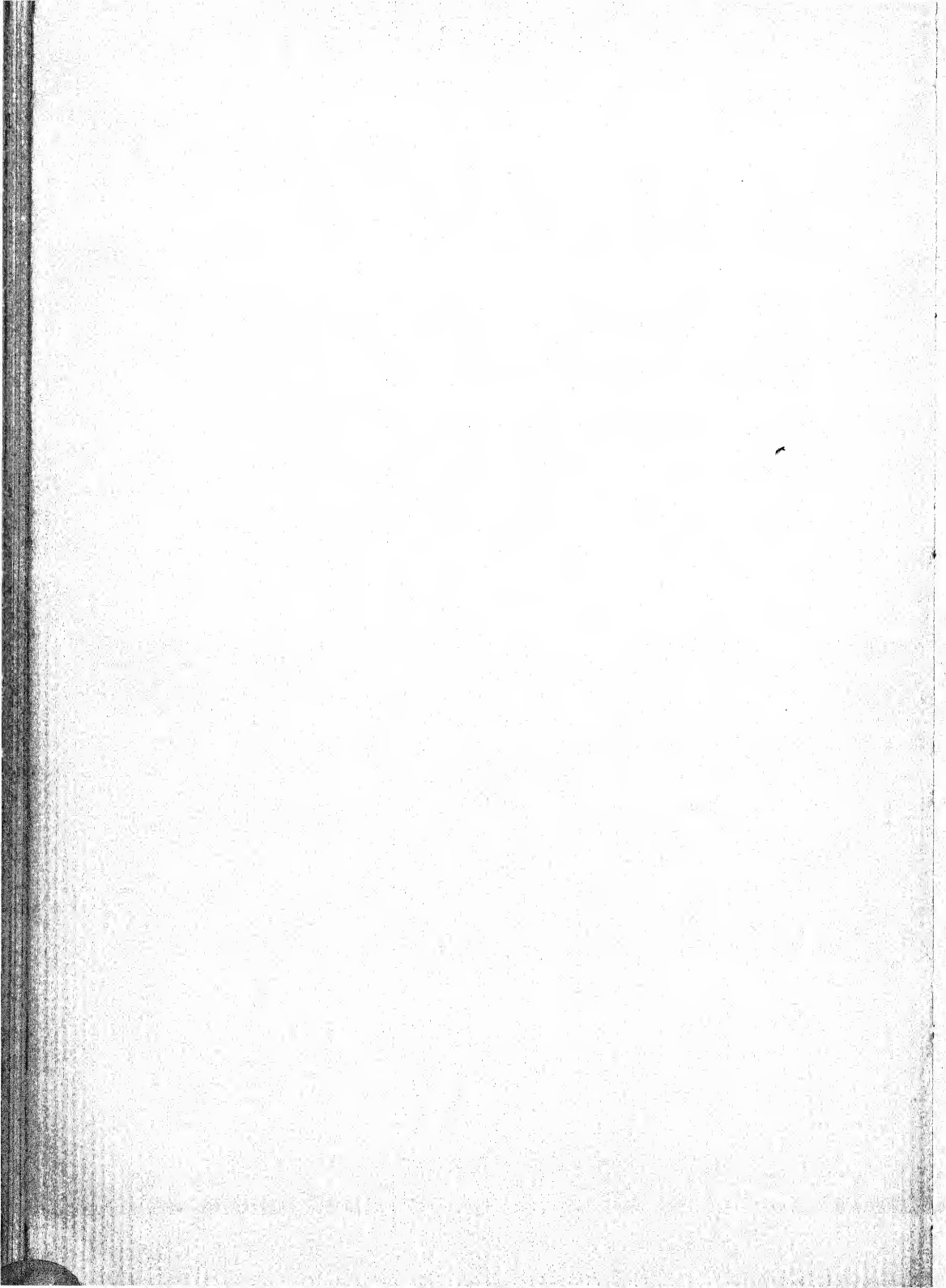
These distinctive exhibition techniques lead on to something that, for good or bad, is subversive of traditional



CRANE MUSEUM

DALTON, MASS.





museum character. Museums have always been concerned with *original* materials—objects from the “apperceptive mass” upon which firsthand knowledge and experience are based. Now comes the proposition that museums teach also from models, charts, and objects that stand for sophisticated concepts. This may not seem to be novel; a science museum can explain evolutionary change (and most of them do) with the aid of string-diagrams and geological charts; and an art museum can show relationships of form and color (one does elaborately) with optical and mechanical models. But such demonstrations in art and science are very close to the ground in the sense that they merely state what anyone can observe from materials at hand. They speak about objects, not about notions *symbolized* by objects. An exhibit of symbols—conveying what somebody *thinks* about something—is a break with custom; and this break the industry museums are almost forced to make because their ultimate interests are squarely in the realm of sociology. The connotations of an exhibit thus edge in, perhaps turning the most objective chart or model into a species of cartoon (Chapter XV). Especially in the sphere of housing, industrial relations, and government, exhibits can be taken as indoctrinating or merely informative, according to predilection.

**W**ILL PROPAGANDA ENTER thus into the affairs of museums? The suggestion may seem like a cry of “wolf,” but consider a question or two. Will industry museums, having explained the industrial revolution in terms of 1830, go on through to the 1930’s with the interpretation? If so, might not someone take issue with the presentation, no matter how fairly or tactfully

it is made? Could an objection in the public press raise questions about who is running the museum? Would public support be then at stake? If so, must industry be ready to foot the bill? How long would that solve the problem? These are not impertinent questions. They are indications of a problem that must be solved in the interest of clear thinking and sound result.

The most conspicuous rock to avoid is persuasive teaching. The museum's work is to lay before the senses what will furnish the mind with information and wisdom and the perceptions with power and skill. But to influence action directly is not its task. Europe has so-called museums where parents are instructed in the care of children, but in truth these are not museums any more than the dairying exhibits of agriculture departments are museums.

There may be a wide or a narrow margin between the industry museum and the propaganda agency, depending upon the treatment of purposes that President Frank B. Jewett of the New York museum suggests, when he says "Great industries which have already gone a long way in establishing out-of-hours courses may ask why they should consider contributing money or material to the museum. To them my answer would be that the museum can do much for their personnel which they cannot hope to do themselves. Added to this is the fact that they must look to the community for new personnel and the better informed this group is on the elements of applied science the better stock it is on which to graft the special training of a particular art. Further, no industry, large or small, can long escape being cited before the bar of public opinion as to some phase of its operations. When that time comes, if we feel we have a just case, we will wish for a public jury that has some understanding of our

problems and not one moved wholly by its emotions.” (*Bell Telephone Laboratories*, January, 1935.)

These are serious problems for the public museum of industry, but they need not perplex an industrial museum of another kind—one that is the property of a business corporation—for which we here offer the name *company museum*.

COMPANY MUSEUMS deserve to be recognized as a separate class; they are distinct in character, purpose, and management. At present there are 19 of them, all established since 1900, but they are likely to increase greatly in number. Industry has need for hundreds of such museums, and it has the ability to bring hundreds into being.

The oldest company museum is that of the United Shoe Machinery Corporation of Boston, dating from 1901; the second oldest is the Industrial Museum of the American Steel and Wire Company in Worcester, from 1908. Most of the others were started in the years of prosperity before 1930. Among them are the Crane Museum of paper at Dalton, Massachusetts, the Bell System Historical Museum in the West Street laboratories of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, New York, and (though formally independent) the John Woodman Higgins Armory, which is a museum of steel products, ancient and modern, in the plant of the Worcester Pressed Steel Company. There are also museums of machinery, transportation, collars, drugs, and chemicals. (Appendix M.)

These are all primarily museums of the history of industry, keeping the record of the parent concern's past,

and also attempting something of a general chronicle of progress in methods and results in the same line. To a moderate extent they may relate to leaders and be biographic, but the bulk of that responsibility usually falls upon the company library with its clipping files. There is a healthy element of pride in the company's career behind most of these museums, and nowhere does this come out more delightfully than at Crane and Company's museum in the Old Stone Mill of 1844 at Dalton.

There may be also a business motive, as in preserving patent models and other materials that could be useful in support of issues coming before the courts. The Bell System Historical Museum has, for example, a series of models of telephone instruments that were used in extended litigation of the Bell patents.

Another usefulness to the parent company is through indirect advertising. This is a legitimate role, not likely to be overdone because direct emphasis on that side would quickly make the museum trivial—and would probably dictate breaking up the collection for window display or something of the sort. The best kind of indirect advertising is given through disinterested historical and technical treatment of the general field. The museum of the United Shoe Machinery Corporation attempts through exhibits and lectures to bring out the complexity of shoe making so that people will better understand the cost; this is a proper service to the industry that uses its company's machines, and it does not belittle the museum.

Most company museums depend from year to year upon one company for finances, which may be disastrous if hard times hit the business. Commendable therefore is the course several companies have taken in giving museums permanent endowment. The John Woodman Higgins Armory, separately incorporated, is thus entrenched. Also the Mariners' Museum at Newport



News, Virginia, incorporated under a board of trustees drawn from the heads of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company, is formally a public institution in a building of its own. The Grand Rapids Furniture Museum, in which the furniture industry is interested, is also a public museum.

Though concerned with the past, company museums must also keep up the contemporary record. In this they are able to succeed where a larger museum of industry would fail. The company museum's responsibility is special; each can restrict itself, in this, to the realm of the parent company.

In another way, too, there can be a lively interest in today. Recognizing that the plant itself is the master exhibit of contemporary method, some of the company museums extend their attention into the works. The Ford Rotunda at Dearborn, rebuilt from the Century of Progress Exposition, is both exhibition building and headquarters for visitors to the River Rouge Plant of the Ford Motor Company. This arrangement—found elsewhere too—is very likely to spread. Already every company that shows people through its plant has, in a sense, started a museum.

One may safely anticipate that company museums will some day spring up in numbers. There is a place for one of these little institutions in every successful company in each of the hundreds—nay, thousands—of commercial and industrial lines. No company museum need be top-heavy; a modest collection would reflect a small business as justly as an extensive collection under a fairly elaborate museum set-up would reflect a great corporation. There are sufficient motives of self-interest to promote and sustain such museums, even through times of stress when secondary interests are temporarily dropped. And there are social benefits that should supply the needed stimulus

for action in times of prosperity. When the history of modern enterprise comes to be written, many of the materials of research would be at hand if companies would meanwhile keep the material record.

It takes many decades for a plan like this to put down the necessary roots. Already this preparation is far advanced for company museums, and soon there may be a burst of museum making in the money-making world.

## PUBLIC MUSEUMS

### CHAPTER VI

THE TERM *PUBLIC MUSEUM* has taken on a new meaning since last century when it heralded the museum for all the people, and was used to contrast the new institutions of this broad character with older society museums run for a few and with private museums belonging to individuals. It was applied as freely to a state or a national as to a local museum. But now this is changed. Society museums have transformed themselves into museums for all; private museums have shrunk to unimportance as a class; and other kinds like state, national, school, and college museums have acquired well accepted generic terms of their own. In present-day idiom, a public museum is just the museum in a community, the museum in a city or a town—broad purposes taken for granted. *Public library* has a like meaning; it is not used any longer to hail what are now commonplace purposes, but just to designate the library of the place.

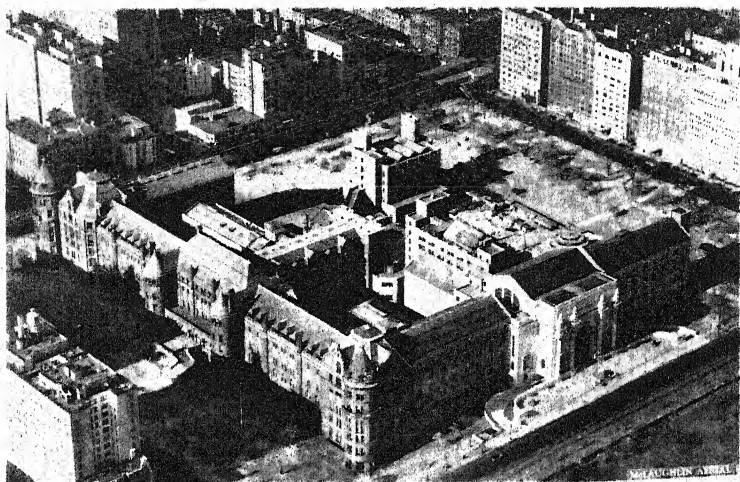
There are 722 public museums of all kinds—224 of art, 358 of history, 8 of industry or the like, 72 of science, and 60 general museums (Appendices F and U). In these numbers are included museums ranging widely from little things, like many historical societies and some art and natural history societies, to great public institutions. This lumping is justified by the growing up process, and also by museums varying in size with communities. However, the total is no doubt overloaded with small societies, especially of history. Allowing for this, it may be said that there are 400 going public museums.

These museums devote themselves (with varying degrees of skill and success) to serving young and old in their communities by methods discussed in the chapters of Volume Two. There is such a thing as the typical program of a public museum, but failure to live up to it can hardly, in the present state of museums, be taken as a mark of disqualification. Similarly there are different varieties of administrative set-up, but among them a typical form of organization can be seen.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE SET-UP of all institutions is shaped by forces of circumstance endeavoring to establish workable types. In the case of public museums, there has been a steady drift away from arrangements handed down from the past, bestowed by benefactors, or taken on by infant museums—away from all such, towards a workable common scheme.

The plan that is the end-product of this drift is the now familiar partnership between a non-profit corporation and a town or city government. The corporation, run by a self-perpetuating board with a minority of ex-officio city representatives, is the controlling element. Typically it has the form of a society with members who pay dues, but who set up no clamor to vote since there are no tangible dividends. It employs a staff, makes collections, does such work as a museum should, and gets an endowment if and when it can. The city, for its part, provides a building, often in a park; and it may make annual appropriations. This plan, in more or less perfection, is now solidly established.

Its origin? Reader, brace yourself for a shock... The great Tweed's henchman, Sweeney, thought of it!

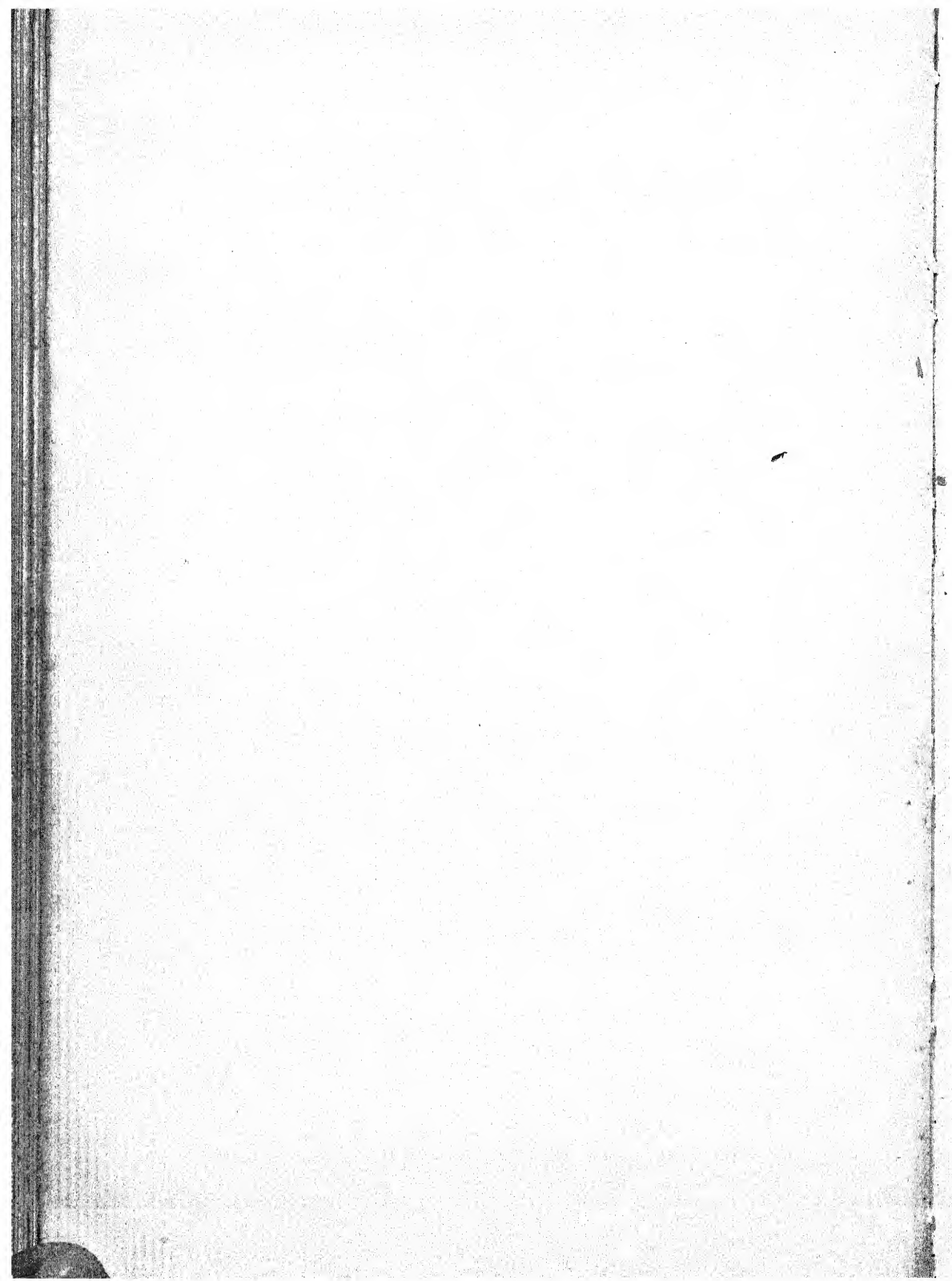


*Photo by McLaughlin Aerial Surveys*

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

NEW YORK





That was in the 'seventies. When the joint committee of New York's American and Metropolitan museums called at Albany in the spring of 1871 to present their petition bearing 40,000 names, they hoped to get money from the city—with the state's permission—so they could build *for themselves*. But what they got through act of Legislature was a partnership with the city, under which New York would put up its own buildings for the museums to occupy. Historians customarily record the event in some such way as this: "A most fortunate circumstance in the educational history of the City of New York was the discovery and embodiment in the Contract with the City of a new idea in municipal government—namely, the erection of the building and its maintenance by the municipality, and the donation by Trustees and other citizens of all the collections." (Henry Fairfield Osborn. *The American Museum of Natural History, Its Origin, Its History*... New York, 1911.) This is very impressive.

But now listen to Committeeman George Fisk Comfort's reminiscence of the visit to Albany: "We arrived there and we were placed in seats behind Mr. Tweed as he sat at a table, ... and as we handed the paper in, he looked at it a moment, saw the heading, and instantly, with that celerity of action for which he was noted, he took it to a room, and said: 'You will see Mr. Sweeney. He will take charge of this.' Then Mr. Sweeney took the paper and skipped the heading, and looked at the names, and when he saw the names attached to it, then he turned back and read the heading. And as I watched his face there was not the quiver of an eye, or twitch of the muscles, but he turned quickly and said: 'Please inform these gentlemen that we are the servants of the people.' "

That was the first call; when the committee came back with some desired further facts, Sweeney began again where he had left off: " 'We are the elected and official representatives of the City,' he said, 'and you ask this sum to be given to a museum to be built on city property. *Now, as representatives of the City we must control that building,' and as quick as thought, our Committee turned and conceded that point, and the statute was passed, and with that commenced the cooperation of the municipality with the individual contributors.*" (Remarks by Comfort on the records of the fortieth annual meeting of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, quoted in: Winifred E. Howe. *A History of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York, 1913, page 139. Italics are ours.) The plan was developed further in New York when the city began appropriating toward museum operations in 1873.

The precedent was later followed in other cities, one after another, and now the plan is found in nearly 70 places. Most of these places are in the states around New York, but some other parts of the country—notably progressive California—have the plan even better established in the sense that a larger proportion of museums have adopted it. Conservative New England, though, will have nothing to do with it.

The cooperative plan is clearly the administrative set-up toward which things are moving. Statistics may seem to prove otherwise, since a count of public museum buildings would show three to one against this conclusion; but the figures give a wrong impression because they chiefly represent cases upon which pooled experience never had a chance to work. Observing changes over a number of years, and noting the present policies of museum boards, one cannot doubt that city partnership is the plan of destiny. Gifts and bequests have put up many buildings, as the names of museums all too plainly

show, but there is increasing inclination to give the building to the city for a museum's use, instead of putting it straight into the museum's hands. A stimulus to city ownership of buildings has come from grants of federal funds for local public works during the 1930's. This has provided a number of independent organizations with homes.

Museums have cultivated city relations in the face of the old tradition that condemns political entanglements. They have done this with no deluded faith, but because they know how to get the banana without the spider. The independent self-perpetuating board is the safeguard. With such a board, a museum can occupy a city building and accept city appropriations without danger of interference. No museum has ever been put out of house by the city. It is conceivable that some museum may have lost its city appropriation because of independence, but most agree that there is no sense in declining an appropriation when it can be had, just because it may not be continued always. (See Chapter XI for discussion of city support.)

City *control* is quite another matter. Only 52 out of 722 public museums are run by cities (Appendix F). This form of management, thus comparatively rare, does not have many advocates. Only three museums have elected it after independent existence: the Grand Rapids Public Museum, which was turned over to the city in 1902 after nearly half a century of obscure existence, and the Pacific Grove Museum and Detroit Institute of Arts that made their changes in 1916 and 1919 respectively.

Much has been said against municipal control, and there is no indication at present that museums will ever be city-operated in large numbers. A museum run as part of a city government, or under commissioners that

the mayor or the city council appoints, is likely to be occupied too much of the time in holding its own against new administrations that know not Joseph. Many libraries, to be sure, are under cities; but among the larger libraries that rely upon bequests and gifts, as museums do, the partnership plan is in force. The people do not trust city fathers, and it is commonly observed that city control of museums cuts off gifts and chokes membership participation. Detroit, where the plan is very successful, has made a safeguard by retaining the independent Founders Society of its early years as an auxiliary. Similarly, Davenport and Muskegon have societies of Friends, and Rochester has a Museum Association chartered in 1935.

There is some vagueness in discussion and writings about what constitutes city control. It is usual, for instance, to speak of the City Art Museum, St. Louis, as a municipal museum, but actually it is a clear case of the partnership plan. It has an incorporated self-perpetuating board; and, true to form, it occupies a city-owned building and receives city support. The only confusing feature is that the city has been given title to collections—an arrangement not unique, although ordinarily the independent board owns all but the building. Even in St. Louis the board has the *right* to hold its own property, whether objects of art, money, or real estate; and title to some gifts has been so vested. This last feature shows how circumstances tend to bring exceptional arrangements into line.

Again and again anomalous beginnings come around to the proven plan. Some time ago at Wichita two art museums were in prospect. The Art Institute was to be run by the city park commissioners and a bequest for building had been left, while there was also the Art Association with plans of its own. But after a few years had shaken





PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

PHILADELPHIA



things down, the city built a building and gave the use of it to the Association. A double name is all that lives on to tell the story; and double names are common among museums that have grown up step by step.

Baltimore has another illustration. In 1931 the city acquired the private gallery of Henry Walters by bequest. There was a building, a collection, an endowment. The city wisely incorporated a self-perpetuating board of trustees to run the institution, and thus by reverse route arrived at the usual end. Again; back in the 'twenties, Philadelphia built a great pile at the head of the Parkway, and the pile stood there empty until the long-established Pennsylvania (now Philadelphia) Museum of Art—with an independent board—was empowered to take it over as one of its buildings. Now almost everyone has forgotten that there was once the threat of a separate museum under politics.

A very common course of growing up, in the life of a museum that does not spring full fledged into being, is from the free society stage, with the beginning of a collection but no home; to the settled society stage, with exhibits in rooms perhaps over the public library; to the intermediate stage, with increased income for public services and professional management; to the final stage, with a building provided by the city.

It is cheering to see how time can work miracles upon unpromising institutions. Very many are the records of obscure beginnings—perhaps long held back in efforts to get under way, and then suddenly propelled by circumstances to a place of importance. A brilliant example is that of an obscure hobby pursued for years in the old Gracie Mansion on the bank of the Harlem River, transformed between 1928 and 1930 into the Museum of the City of New York on Fifth Avenue.

But not all little museums *can* grow up. Some are

limited by being attached to other institutions. For these we here coin the name *sub-museum*.

**S**UB-MUSEUMS, or exhibits and near-museums subordinate to establishments of other kinds, form a mixed group (Appendix R). Many of them show the activities of government departments, national associations, research institutions, chambers of commerce, social organizations, and other bodies to which they belong. Strictly, company museums are sub-museums; and, in a way, so are most school and college museums. "But these classes are distinct, and they include full-fledged museums to which the small fry is inseparably linked by intergrade examples, and nothing would be gained by calling them *subs*."

Library exhibits (Appendix Q) form the largest group of sub-museums. (Such exhibits should be differentiated sharply from independent little museums, with organizations of their own, that happen to have their quarters in library buildings.) Some library exhibits are useful, but all too many of them are merely burdens to institutions that might well follow an early example of Boston or a recent example of Newark. When Eaton reported to the Bureau of Education on the state of libraries in the nation, in 1876, the Boston Athenaeum—a library—had a museum feature; and Eaton approved the plan of combining libraries and museums on the ground of British precedent. But forthwith the Athenaeum made the wise move of transferring its collection to the Museum of Fine Arts. Newark's example was that of turning the Public Library's sub-museum into the independent Newark Museum—a daughter institution now grown up to be its mother's sister. However, fifty or more other

libraries that have become with museum have never labored—the New York Public Library, with its art galleries from irrevocable acts of the dead, the greatest of them all.

Incidentally, libraries have certain exhibition functions that are proper to their work. They need a place to hang prints and to show rare books, fine illustrations, and bindings. What they show comes from shelves, and their purpose in putting it out is to stimulate interest in books. The libraries think of such exhibits as advertising. One institution, the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, carries this to the point of having exhibition windows that look out to the sidewalk—glorified bulletins urging people to read. Such things have little or nothing to do with museums.

**M**USEUMS IN LIBRARIES, as distinguished from exhibits that belong to libraries, are simply guest institutions. Some of the strongest museums got their start in this way. As hosts, libraries now provide quarters for about 95 museums, of which 70 are historical; and many new art associations and historical societies that have not yet begun to form collections are holding their meetings and sometimes their temporary exhibitions under library roof. This represents an important public service on the part of librarians.

Ordinarily, museums that are headed for success do not stay many years in borrowed rooms. But this does not always hold. The Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences spent over 40 years from 1887 on the top floor of the public library, and now it has a million dollar edifice. Also the Erie Public Museum, now planning to build, has been in a library basement since 1898.



*Out* of keeping with the idea of having museums independent are a score of library-museums—created with the two parts coordinate, under the same management, sharing a building between them. This plan dates back to fifty years ago; Jamestown started it in 1889 and five nearby towns in western New York soon followed suit. The most recent examples are two of 1930 in California. New England has most often tried the experiment and made certain economies, but with very poor success. In small places where one person takes care of both library and museum, that person is a librarian and the museum fares not well. Santa Barbara's new Faulkner Memorial Art Gallery is the one important exception; but the rule stands. Libraries choke museums whether the two have separate floors, separate wings—or only distinct ambitions. Where there are two people in charge, side by side, as in a few places, the chance is better for a good museum—and for friction also.

A few museums are run by library boards. In Springfield, Massachusetts, with four museums and one library, the emphasis may seem to be misplaced, but the library is strongest, and the board is the library board. This plan works well, but only Springfield, Oakland, Paterson, and a few small towns have tried it. At Coshocton, Ohio, there is a joint-board with equal favor for both institutions. Libraries, chiefly under the influence of Andrew Carnegie, were much inclined toward the civic center sort of thing a few years ago, so it is not surprising that Pittsburgh put forth an illustrious demonstration of how two museums, a library, and a music hall can live together under a single roof. But the idea did not take hold.

Entirely outside the scope of these remarks are three excellent institutions of special character—the Pierpont Morgan Library and the Folger Shakespeare Library in

the East, and the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery in California. Also it is not intended here to comment on the problem of historical societies in which museum and library functions are intimately joined.

**P**RIVATE, OR LARVAL, MUSEUMS are not as numerous as most people think. There are thousands of private collections but most of them are unimportant and they disappear sooner or later if they are not given to museums. But private museums—or private collections with buildings or rooms open at times to the public—number less than 30. (Appendix L.) Private museums are “larval” because there is every likelihood of their developing into public institutions, as others of their kind have done in past.

Some very important museums have come from the hands of collectors in recent years, as the names of Morgan, Huntington, Barnes, Phillips, Gardner, Taft, Whitney, Frick, Walters, Ringling, and Bache can testify. What Freer and Mellon have done for the nation in the field of art, they and others have done for communities; and Heye, principally, has followed a similar course in the field of science. The giving of whole museums has precedent from the early days of Appleton's cabinet and the gallery of Luman Reed. It had not reached full pitch in the 1880's and 'nineties when the gifts of Crocker, Smith, Parrish, and Valentine were made. The crest came after 1900 with the very grand manner of Morgan and Huntington. As for the future, collectors whose treasures are still in their homes may be expected to create museums from time to time; but one cannot say whether Widener and others of his kidney will make new institutions, or—following in the paths of Altman,

Johnson, and the Rockefellers—will enrich museums that exist already.

Not to be overlooked among private museums are historic houses belonging to individuals but regularly open to the public (Appendix O). There are about 75 of these, besides many residences open only on occasions.

**G**ENERAL MUSEUMS, embracing more than one field, are to be found in about 60 places (Appendix E). Nearly half of them are in cities of more than 100,000 population, but examples appear all along the population scale: witness, Brooklyn (borough population 2,560,000), Los Angeles (1,240,000), Newark (440,000), San Antonio (230,000), Spokane (115,000), Pittsfield (50,000), Massillon, Ohio (26,000), Flagstaff, Arizona (3,900), and Three Oaks, Michigan (1,300). Such distribution is surprising, as one might expect considerations of economy to prescribe general museums for the smaller places with very limited ability to pay. But it does not go that way. Usually a small town begins with whatever kind of museum—whether of history, art, or science—the circumstances are right for. If it cannot support a second museum, no second museum appears or long survives. This is probably fortunate; most small museums are one-man institutions and rare is the person versatile enough to carry on work in two or three fields single-handed.

It has been suggested that the interpretation of art history, anthropology, and applied science—all together as culture history—may consolidate a general museum into a museum of one purpose, if not strictly of one field. Several museums have made a point of this—most notably

the Charleston Museum, the Valentine Museum in Richmond, and the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield, each of which has been in turn under the direction of Laura Bragg, now of Pittsfield. Also the Newark Museum, still under the spell of Dana, and the Brooklyn Museum, transformed by Philip Youtz, have moved in much the same direction. The culture history idea is spreading, by the way, among museums that are not general, as well as among the general museums for which it performs the service of consolidation.

The number of general public museums is increasing very slowly. The past decade has brought forth only 23—none of them strong. The best known examples are all of an earlier generation, and it may be that the general local museum, as now conceived, is a thing of the past. However, state museums because of wide responsibility (Chapter VII) are taking in all the fields.

Considerable weeding out of collections has gone on among general museums for the purpose of restricting them to a single field. The Wadsworth Atheneum submerged science and became a museum of art. The Memorial Museum at San Francisco put tons of historical material away after Founder De Young had finished his days of collecting, and now it too is an art museum. The Colorado Museum of Natural History gave its paintings to the Denver Art Museum. The St. Paul Institute also dropped art and thereupon christened its Science Museum. Historical societies—that, as a lot, need weeding badly—are little by little getting rid of such things as minerals, fossils, and Indian arrowheads. However, it would be a mistake to think of these societies as general. A few, like the Mattatuck Historical Society in Connecticut, go in deliberately for art and science as well as history; but most of them are merely harboring irrelevant stuff.

**S**PECIAL MUSEUMS are museums not of one field, but—by definition—of a *part* of one of the main fields. Far Eastern art, geological science, history of whaling are typical specialities. Specialization shows a different pattern in each of the different fields.

*Art* comes nearest to having the kinds of special museums one might lay out schematically. For modern art: the Museum of Modern Art in New York and its branches in other cities, the Phillips Memorial Gallery in Washington, and the Barnes Foundation near Philadelphia. For American Art: the Whitney Museum in New York, and the Addison Gallery at Andover—the latter a public museum in some functions though a school museum in form. For the arts of other nations: the Hispanic Society in New York, the Germanic Museum at Harvard (also someways public), and the Institute of Swedish Arts in Minneapolis. New York is incubating museums of French and Irish Art. For European mediaeval art there is the Cloisters, branch of the Metropolitan Museum. Oriental art, though it has no local public museum, does have the national Freer Gallery, and the University of Oregon Museum at Eugene. For decorative art there is the museum of Cooper Union; and lastly for the industrial arts, the Textile Museum of the District of Columbia, The Museum of Costume Art in New York, and The Grand Rapids Furniture Museum.

The oldest special museum of art is the Museum for the Arts of Decoration, Cooper Union. Next came those of national arts in the first decade of the present century. Most of the others appeared in the decade after the World War—the movement being just well started in 1929 when depression halted it until 1937. Although a few of the special art museums are in small places, the species belongs as yet to big cities. Ten are in the City of New York.



Not all special museums are small. One might think they were, from reading occasional newspaper lamentations over the great museums, with advice that we look to Europe and note that Paris, London, and other places have separate museums for different branches of art. The irony of it is that writers point straight to the Victoria and Albert colossus—a special museum—forgetting that, since the days of Jevons, Englishmen have wanted to carve up that institution because of its bulk. Big museums will be with us always; some will be encyclopedic, and some special. When large museums become too unwieldy to serve their primary purpose—which is to aid study and scholarship—the world will find ways to reduce them, but the troubles caused so far by large size are troubles for the casual visitor.

There is another kind of special art museum beside that devoted to a subject division of the field. Five artists are represented by one-man institutions—Rodin at Philadelphia; Saint-Gaudens at Cornish, New Hampshire; Remington at Ogdensburg, New York; Barnard at Madison, Indiana; and Elisabet Ney at Austin, Texas. An increasing number of such museums should occupy birthplaces and former homes of artists—as historic house museums and art museums in one. Gilbert Stewart's birthplace in Rhode Island is now a house museum and the time may come when it will have an annex for paintings and other Stewartiana, after the manner of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial in New Hampshire. Winslow Homer's studio in Maine will soon be a museum house; works of the artist, in original or reproduction, should be gathered together there. Whistler's birthplace, owned by the art association at Lowell, Massachusetts, and Benjamin West's birthplace on the Swarthmore campus are two other houses deserving to be used in this way. Doubtless other comparable houses are

preserved, and more will qualify as artist's reputations become secure.

Meanwhile, by the way, there may be some new museums in the tradition set by Isabella Stewart Gardner, and by Huntington, Taft, Frick, and Bache whose homes with art collections have been opened as mansion museums. These, however, are not special museums unless the collection is developed along some one line, as in the case of Huntington's English paintings of the 18th century.

*In the science field* one might expect to find special museums of geology, palaeontology, ornithology, and entomology, and museums for different regions of the earth. But in fact, except for herbariums and anthropology museums, the only special public museums of science are the New York Botanical Garden's museum and a dreadful African museum in California. Thayer's museum of birds and Vanderbilt's Marine Museum are private. Anatomy museums, as now constituted, are for students rather than the public, and so are the special teaching museums of geology, palaeontology, botany, and zoology under college departments and university schools.

Anthropology does have its own institutions—nearly a score of them among public museums, including the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles, the San Diego Museum, the Laboratory of Anthropology in Santa Fe, and the Museum of the American Indian in New York. All are young. The first founded was the Southwest Museum, dating from 1903. Before that time there were museums of anthropology only in colleges and universities.

There are many science museums of local or regional scope, and some of them—where the locality or area has

special character—are partly specialized. But ordinarily a local museum is one using materials from near at hand to illustrate a broad story. The Museum of Natural History at Springfield, Massachusetts, is a good example of this. It interprets the plan of nature—which can be done without exotic forms, without a giraffe or an elephant. Incidentally, be it noted that the task of showing exotic forms belongs also to the zoological park. Zoos are adopting much of the spirit of museum exhibits in their new buildings, with cages that have backgrounds and accessories like those of habitat groups. Museums may well think twice before trying to fix in dead celluloid, wax, and maché too much of what zoos and aquariums can show alive.

*The history field*, also, has special museums. There are several Confederate museums and other war memorials, half a dozen museums of whaling or the sea, one of numismatics, and several representing European elements in America. However, most special museums of history are not public museums but either historic house museums (many of them biographical or concerned with one event) or sub-museums reflecting interests of their parent organizations (golf, free masonry, Red Cross service, police methods, work of the federal government).

Localization is very common, especially attentiveness to the home county—sometimes to the locality, as with the Museum of the City of New York, Baltimore's Municipal Museum, and the new little Denver Museum. This may lead to genuine specializing where the place has some outstanding interest; for example, there is a Netherlands Museum of Dutch culture at Holland, Michigan; and a Museum of Base Ball at Cooperstown, New York, where the first diamond was laid out. In such directions there is a lot to be done.

**B**RANCH MUSEUMS are as sea serpents—much talked about but difficult to find. President Osborn proposed to establish a branch of the American Museum on New York's East Side as early as 1911, and Secretary Kent was advocating the same step for the Metropolitan Museum at about the same time. The idea must have been in the air, for Rea was able to write of museum branches, in 1914, as "the problem now pressing for solution." But after twenty years one can do little more than repeat those very words.

There are branch *exhibits* now, however. The Newark Museum has space in seven branch public libraries, and circulates small exhibits carefully prepared. Typical installations are those of old lace, early American maps, reproductions of paintings, minerals, and objects relating to the fishing industry; book lists and books in the exhibits tie up each subject with reading matter in the library. This has been going on systematically since 1929. On a larger scale, but for a shorter time, the Metropolitan Museum has maintained neighborhood circulating exhibitions in New York. Beginning in 1933 with arts of the Far East, medieval Europe and ancient Egypt, displayed in rotation at settlement houses for Jews of Rivington Street, Irish of West 27th Street, and Italians of Barrow Street, the museum has extended the number of shows and of showplaces so that 27 locations—in schools, colleges, libraries, and other public buildings—have already been used. The Hudson Park Branch Library in New York's Greenwich Village has a new exhibition wing with equipment suited to the needs of these exhibitions. The growth of the program under Curator Richard F. Bach gives point to Director Winlock's statement at the beginning that "The Museum will watch this series of exhibitions with great interest, will endeavor to find out to what extent there is a need for

them and how much interest they create in the three neighborhoods which have been chosen. . . . Furthermore, the Museum hopes to collect data which might be of use if in the future it becomes feasible to establish branch museums in the city." (*Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, November, 1933). These neighborhood exhibits in Newark and New York were not the first of their kind, but they are the fruits of the first two systematic and extensive efforts to spread out physically over a large community. Another development, like these in a way, is the establishing of more than 20 extension galleries in or near places with community art centers sponsored by the Federal Art Project of W. P. A.

Several other museums have outlying exhibition space—the Rochester Museum in the Academy of Medicine, the Denver Art Museum in the visitors building of Red Rock Park for its Gallery of Indian Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago in the Garfield Park administration center for a selected exhibition of paintings and sculptures. The last, according to announcements, is one of a series of community art centers projected for Chicago. It is open every afternoon and on Sunday and Monday evenings from seven to nine o'clock, and once a week there is a conducted gallery tour by an instructor from the Art Institute. Also the Alger House of the Detroit Institute of Arts, a former residence at Grosse Pointe, has been open since 1936 with a permanent display on the first floor, changing exhibitions above, and place for instruction below. These are steps in the right direction but they do not go as far as the whilom 69th Street Branch of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The 69th Street Branch was seen from the Spring of 1931 until the Fall of 1932. It occupied a store on the busiest block in a near-suburban section, and Curator Philip Youtz—in competition with the chain store man,



the baker, and the soda fountaineer—talked with wives, children, business men, and all others who dropped in. Here was a genuine branch museum. It had a staff and exhibitions drawn from the main museum, quarters under its full control, and a budget of its own (which the Carnegie Corporation met as an experiment). Exhibitions were small and homogeneous for direct appeal, and they were changed frequently as an inducement for visitors to come again and again. The experiment was a huge success. But times were bad, and retrenchment robbed 69th Streeters of the first branch art museum.

There are, one observes, auxiliary museums of various kinds that are sometimes referred to loosely as branch museums. Philadelphia has Memorial Hall, one of the two main buildings of the Philadelphia Museum of Art; and the Rodin Museum, a special museum; and several historic house museums—all under the same institution. In New York there is the Cloisters in Fort Tryon Park, a special museum connected with the Metropolitan; and there is a storage building in the Bronx belonging to the Heye Foundation in Manhattan; and the Brooklyn Children's Museum is under the Brooklyn Museum's board. In Cleveland and in some other places there are trailsides operated by the local museums.

Also there are instances of a small museum in one place being under the control or sponsorship of a big museum in another. The Los Angeles Museum has its Desert Branch at Twenty-Nine Palms, California; and the Museum of New Mexico has protege institutions in several towns of the state. But these are not branches in the sense of the branch public library, which is a neighborhood arm.

In view of the fact that public libraries in the larger cities have from 20 to 40 or 50 branches each, that the number of branch libraries in the country has more than doubled in a decade, and that 50 or more libraries have a

staff supervisor of branches, it seems strange that anyone should feel the need for reassuring the public museums that branches would not affect their interests adversely. But such reassurance is heard frequently, and no doubt it reflects the struggle every museum has to meet its budget. The truth is that community service, increased temporarily at the expense of field work, acquisition, or research, would be bread on the waters. When public service is really successful there will be more support for background activities upon which it depends. The future of big museums is undoubtedly in scholarship, but this will be difficult to support unless public relations and school services, now developed at a disadvantage in a central building, are extended through neighborhood centers where contacts with the people could be close, where attendance could become casual and habitual, where there would be no museum fatigue, and where evening hours would involve no problems of lighting and operating a vast plant. To say that dividing up a research collection between branches would render it useless is to miss completely the idea of what branches are. They should be service stations requiring only educational materials. Without a main museum to draw upon for administration and material, neighborhood museums cannot carry on. Conversely, it may even prove to be true in the long run that without branches the great city museums will not be able to go on successfully.

Space in libraries and other public buildings may do for a time, but ultimately suitable permanent branch buildings will be necessary. These would be small. Branch library buildings cost about \$50,000 on the average; some have cost less than half that amount. Not until safe places are provided, will important objects be lent much about a city, and not until such risk is taken will people put their full interest in neighborhood exhibits.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUMS are public museums limited in function to serving people under, say, 15 years of age. There are 16 of them (Appendix N). It is a common misapprehension that there are many more—an idea due to the confusion of children's museums with the departments of educational work in public museums, some of which are loosely called *junior museums*, or the like. The administrative difference is of no moment, but there is a very great difference in the fact that a department uses regular public exhibits, even though it may also have some of its own, whereas a children's museum designs everything around the child.

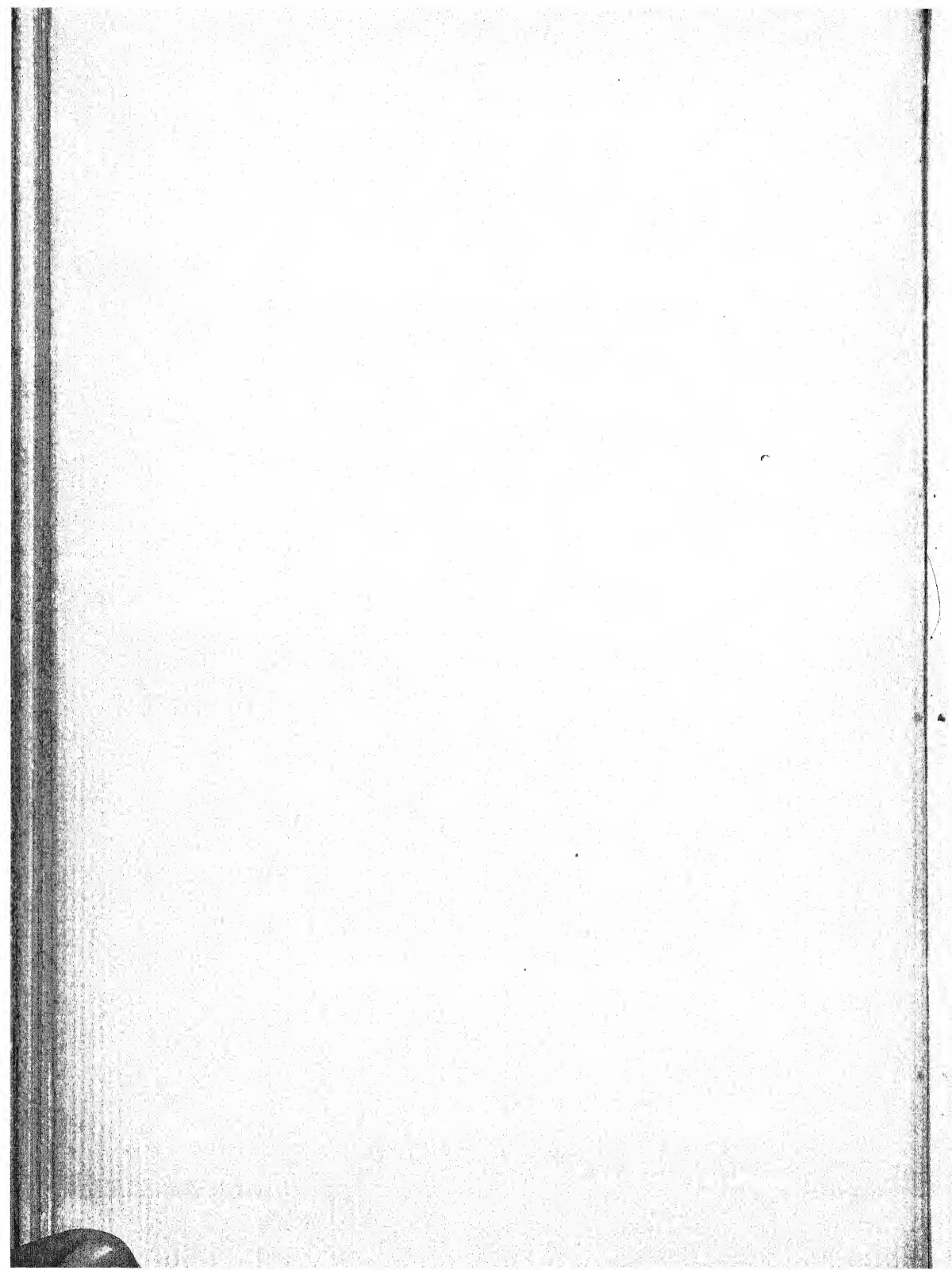
The oldest is the Brooklyn Children's Museum, founded in 1899. In 1913 there followed the Children's Museum, Boston; in 1918, that of Detroit. These are all general museums emphasizing science. In 1915 the Children's Art Center of Boston—the first of two devoted to art—was started. The remaining ten museums date from the 1920's and '30's. They are widely scattered.

The value of this kind of museums rests partly on their being able to meet childhood's distinctive approach to knowledge. The compartments in which the adult's thinking is arranged are sophisticated and artificial; but to the child, the world presents itself as experience relating to food, clothing, work, play, barter, exploration, and other activities of home, street, and field. All of nature—whether animate or inanimate, of lower animals or man—is viewed in these relationships. Thus it is important that exhibits and instruction for children should take knowledge out of formal pigeon holes and present it in relation to these actualities. This is why few children's museums devote themselves to art or science or history alone; most of them are more like general museums with perhaps a leaning to what would be science or some other grown-up subject if it were presented in a grown-up way.



*Courtesy of Brooklyn Museum*  
**BROOKLYN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM**

**NEW YORK**





The children's museum has an advantage over other museums because of its singleness. Long ago, Anna Billings Gallup, at that time head of the first children's museum, rightly said that "... a museum can do the greatest good and furnish the most effective help to the boys and girls who love it as an institution, who take pride in its work for them and with them, and who delight in their association with it. To inspire children with this love for and pride in the institution, they must feel that it was created, and now exists for them, and that in all of its plans, it puts the child first. The child must feel that the whole plant is for him; that the best is offered him because of faith in his power to use it, that he has access to all departments, and that he is always a welcome visitor and never an intruder." (*Proceedings of the American Association of Museums*, 1908, page 86). The familiar assertion that children need the resources of a large museum to draw upon is offset partly by the fact that in many a place there is no such museum. Besides, the value of museum material to the child depends in large part on its presentation to the child—not on its quantity or even its merits in adult eyes.

It seems strange that children's museums have not increased in number apace with the growth of museum work for children. The advantages of such institutions are well understood, and for years children's museums have had abundant praise. Recently the Children's Museums Section of the American Association of Museums has sought the interest of women's organizations, and some projects have been started. But still the snowball has to be pushed. It refuses to roll.

Perhaps one difficulty may be that these museums are put in a weak position by being thought of in relation to large communities and the need for extensive and formal school services that a public museum, with greater

facilities, should carry on. Children's museums are essentially neighborhood institutions catering informally to children living near at hand. As yet museum work has not advanced to the neighborhood stage, as shown by the scarcity of branch museums. When the work does reach this stage—as it surely will in time—children's museums ought to multiply in cities. Meanwhile, general interest might well consider what can be done in small towns, especially towns near the cities that have children's museums now.

## MUSEUMS AND THE STATE

### *CHAPTER VII*

**A**N INVOLVED PICTURE is presented by the museum activities of states. There are state museums under different kinds of auspices. There are sub-museums under state departments concerned with conservation of natural resources and with archives and history. There are state historical societies in a number of relationships with government. There are state-owned historic house museums, and trailside museums in state parks. And there are museums of state universities. Every state has at least one of these lines of work under way, and most of the states have several. The scene as a whole gives indication that the different elements are coming together slowly into a comprehensive program for the state museum of the future.

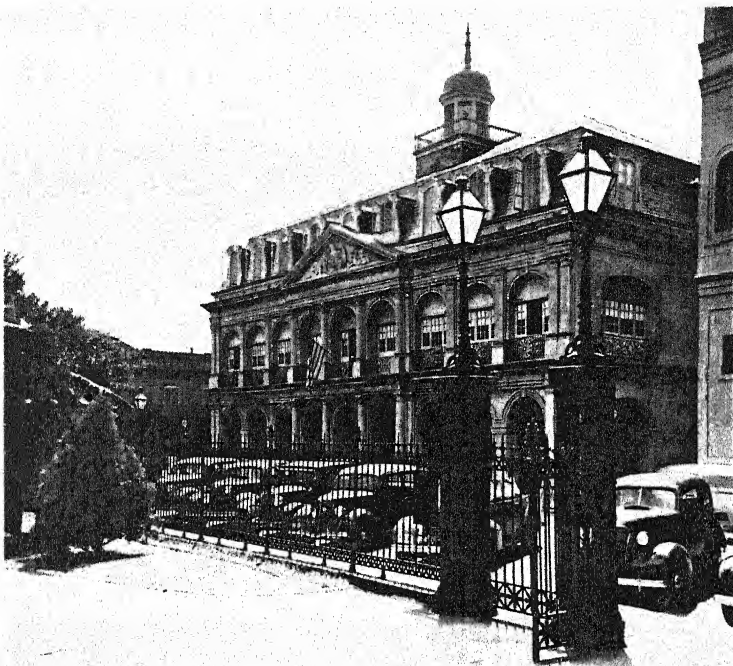
**S**TATE MUSEUMS now number 40 (Appendix G). The three oldest—those of New York from 1843, Vermont from 1845, and Alabama from 1848—owe their origin to the first run of geological and biological surveys that began in the 'thirties; and some of the later state museums came from surveys that followed territorial expansion. But only in Vermont, Alabama, and Georgia is a geological survey in control at present. Various other divisions of state government have a hand in managing museums; New York's museum is now under educational authorities; that of North Carolina, under

the agriculture department; that of Illinois, under a commission of its own.

State museums are found in all parts of the country—from Maine to Arizona, from Florida to Washington. The East has strong museums in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; the Middle West, in Ohio, Illinois, Iowa; the Central States, in Colorado and Nebraska; the West Coast, in Washington; the Southwest, in New Mexico; the Southeast, in Alabama, North Carolina, and Louisiana. Considering the lesser importance of the state in eastern economy, it is perhaps surprising to find eastern and southern states as well represented as they are. But, on the other hand, considering the established place of museums, it is surely surprising that any state should still be without one—as nearly a score of states are, and as some others come close to being.

For a century universities have been connected with museum affairs of the state. Massachusetts gave her survey collections of 1830 to Amherst; Connecticut gave hers of 1835 to Yale; and Michigan's survey of 1837 started a cabinet of natural history at the state university, paving the way for the now important University Museums at Ann Arbor. Several states have set up their regular state museum on the state university campus, as at Seattle and Lincoln. Affiliation with a university is advantageous because of services the museum may be able to draw from the faculty through cooperative arrangements; and even university *control* may be helpful, since it removes the museum an extra step from politics. But a university museum is one thing, and a state museum quite another. Although there may be some overlap of interest, a university museum's main business should be with students on the spot, whereas a state museum's business is with the public throughout the commonwealth.

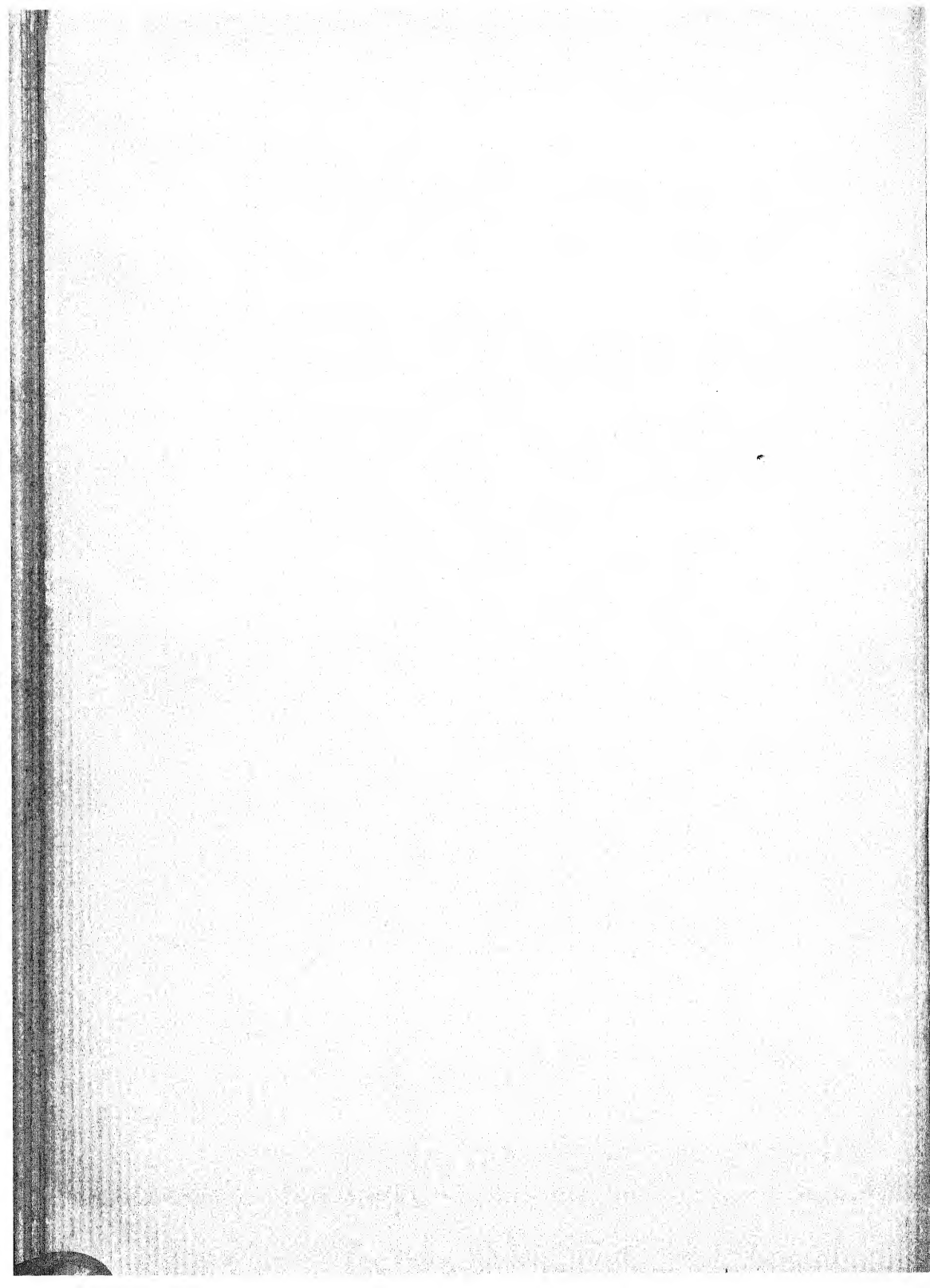
The field of state museums has constantly widened until



LOUISIANA STATE MUSEUM

NEW ORLEANS





now it is tending to be general. Because of their origin, the early state museums were devoted to science; and science has continued to be the field of principal development. History came in for attention at about the turn of the century in some of the states where state historical societies had not developed far on the museums side, notably in New York, Pennsylvania, and Iowa. In Ohio it happened the other way about—the state society bringing up the museum in natural science as well as history. Archaeology and ethnology are treated along with biological science in half a dozen states including Arizona and Washington; along with history in Colorado and Wyoming; and with both biological science and history in a dozen states including New Mexico, New York, and Ohio. The last of these three arrangements seems most likely to prevail.

Industry is adding itself to the fields of the museums that deal with science and history—which is not surprising in view of its close relationships to these fields. But as yet state museums have concerned themselves with natural resources, or raw materials, more than with the processes and products of manufacture; and they have not as yet developed technological and sociological exhibits like those of the public industry museums.

Recently art has engaged the attention of states. Since 1892, to be sure, Iowa has had its Historical, Memorial and Art Building (that ought to be called the Iowa State Museum), but here the *art* means historical pictures, as it does at Louisiana also. Only when New Mexico and Illinois began to make contemporary art collections and New Jersey to hold loan exhibitions were there any significant steps in this direction. These beginnings made it appear that art might come to be included in general state museums of the future. But there has since been established, at Richmond, the sepa

rate Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; subject to legal untangling, Florida has acquired the John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Art, at Sarasota, with a notable collection of paintings; Louisiana is using the old capitol at Baton Rouge and part of the new State Exhibit Building at Shreveport for art; and several other states are making plans. Undoubtedly science and history, including anthropology and industry, will continue together in state museums, but art now seems likely to have state museums of its own in time. The example of the federal government, with its new art programs, will probably lend influence toward this end.

State museums are not well supported at best, and most of them are very poorly supported. Only two get more the \$50,000 a year. (*City* appropriations to public museums run over \$100,000 in several cases, and the highest is over \$400,000.) Further, state museums do not ordinarily have income from sources other than the state. New York gives the best support, \$71,000; Ohio—that used to head the list—is now second with \$63,000; New Jersey, New Mexico, and Iowa follow with \$40,000, \$33,000, and \$30,000 respectively. Four states appropriate about \$20,000 (Illinois, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and Virginia); seven others, about \$10,000 (Alabama, California, Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, and Washington); four others, about \$5,000 (Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, and Wyoming). These figures do not take account of state historical societies (page 141), which however do not brighten the picture much except in Minnesota, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin. Nor do they include Indiana's active Historical Bureau that interests itself extensively in museums.

New England and the Southeast vie with each other for records of poor support. It is Maine and Vermont against Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee,

and West Virginia for which shall do the least without doing nothing. New England has not a single decently supported state museum; and four of its states (Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island) have no state museums at all.

THE FUNCTIONS OF STATE MUSEUMS have only begun to differ from the functions of community museums. For many years writers have been calling attention to the irresponsibility of state museums and pointing out what they should do, but practice has still lagged. Most of the museums have made their case for support as depositories of collections belonging to the commonwealth and perhaps also as research institutions dealing with problems of especial concern to people within their states. Legislatures, for their part, have made relatively small appropriations—about which the museums have habitually complained.

Now there are indications of a change. Although the old state-survey idea of collecting, exhibition, research, and information service persists, several progressive institutions have begun to act on the idea that a state museum is equally responsible for well developed museum work throughout the state. There is more and more lending to schools, as in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Washington; increasing cooperation with state and local agencies as in Louisiana; starting of local museums as in New Mexico; supervision of a growing number of historic sites and museums in state parks, as in Ohio and New York. These are all steps toward filling out what is now widely recognized as a desirable program.

In discussions of the service that should be rendered by state museums to local museums, the idea of state *control*

is frowned upon. Paul Marshall Rea writes of this specifically. "Many towns that cannot afford the entire cost of creating and maintaining effective museums might readily undertake to provide the space and part of a modest operating budget. . . . The state museum could supply circulating exhibits, and much advice and assistance to the local organization. A plan of state aid seems preferable to a system of museums operated entirely by the state. Putting the initiative and part of the responsibility upon the community would strengthen local interest and support." (*The Museum and the Community*. Science Press, 1932, page 181.) Therefore it does not seem wise to call local museums *branches* of the state museum.

Frequently it is suggested that county museums act as intermediaries for the state museum in developing rural service, but this scheme does not look at facts. County museums exist in only a few parts of the country, and most of them are too weak for effective work. County government, with official machinery that is far behind the times, gives little promise of being helpful to museums; even in Indiana where the State Historical Bureau has been prodding the counties for years, county support is given in the merest dribblets. A few city museums serve county areas—as at Charleston, Hagerstown, Pittsfield, and San Diego—but there is no such thing as the county museum comparable to the county-supported library that serves rural areas systematically, leaving sizeable communities to their local libraries. Rural museum service is likely to be developed by the state museum for the state as a whole, without reference to county lines or county authorities.

The first kind of statewide service to be put in operation is that of lending to schools. Several states are doing this actively. The Ohio State Museum has science



and history teaching sets—250, of five kinds—that it mails to schools in the state. There is a lending collection of lantern slides, photographs, motion picture films, and objects in active use from the New Jersey State Museum, and an extensive slide collection at the Pennsylvania State Museum. Sometimes efforts are made to carry on this work through museums in different communities, on the principle that it is better to uphold the hands of going institutions than to compete with local work. New Mexico gives a good example of this with the sets of visual aids, for use of public schools, that the state museum lends to protege societies in a growing number of places.

In emphasizing the need for state-wide services, some museum people take the extreme view that the shop of a state museum should be busy *solely* with making exhibits for circulation—that the state museum's own exhibition halls need not amount to much. If local museums are strengthened, they say, it would not be necessary for school classes to journey partway across the state by bus to see exhibits at the capital. But this overlooks the fact that no state museum can be expected to develop another museum in its own immediate territory to act as leader in that section, in the way the principal museums in other quarters of the state would do in their respective territories with the state museum's aid.

In work with collections, including research, it is even more important that the state museum have a program of its own as well as a policy of helpfulness to other institutions. In some states there are great city museums that cannot be overtaken scientifically, but this does not pre-empt the research field or relieve the state museum of responsibility for filling out research activities within the commonwealth. Deprived of this role, the curators

of a state museum would be like smooth-face scientific eunuchs, cooperative but themselves unproductive and therefore unable to have the respect of their colleagues in other museums.

Publications of the state museum should reflect a balanced program. Besides contributions to knowledge, there should be an output that the public of the state can use. Popular editions could be published for imprinting and circulation by local institutions. Also there might be leaflets interpreting the scenery, geology, wild life, and history of the state for handing out by tourist agencies to travelers. As yet, however, these latter possibilities are neglected.

Finally, state museums have work to do in state parks that is deeply affecting their future.

**M**USEUMS IN STATE PARKS are practically a new thing of the decade. It was in the 'twenties that the trailside museums movement overflowed from national into state parks, and even more recently that historic house programs have been taken up by the several states now restoring houses in parks and creating parks for historical restorations and reconstructions. Before this time Pennsylvania had saved Washington's Headquarters in Valley Forge Park; and New York had preserved some of the old houses now administered in the park system, though located in towns. But the present fast developing situation that brings trailsides, historic houses, and historic areas under state management is quite young.

The museum's part of this picture can be seen best in relation to the state's whole responsibility for nature conservation and historical preservation.

The state park movement goes back 73 years. It began in California in 1865 with the success of efforts to preserve a scenic area (Yosemite Valley, now a national park). In 1885 New York set aside what is at present the oldest and largest of state parks—the Adirondack Forest Preserve. Also New York acquired the Catskill area, and Michigan the Mackinac Island State Park in the same year. And at the turn of the century New York and New Jersey joined in creating the Palisades Interstate Park. These early examples were followed next by Minnesota, Massachusetts, and Ohio, and later by other states until all but two (Colorado and Delaware) had made at least a start. More than 4,000,000 acres of land are now within state parks. This has come about through growing interest in recreation aided by the extension of good roads.

When emphasis began to shift from the solely recreational to include the educational uses of *national* parks, state parks too were considered in a new light. It was seen that typical primitive conditions should be guarded in some ordinary areas as well as sublime features of nature in the nation's parks. States that had been "selling" scenery and climate to tourists turned a little to the idea of preserving areas as records of wild life. But, as Charles C. Adams says in a paper on "The Importance of Establishing Natural History Reservations for Research and Education" (*New York State Museum Bulletin* 288, 1931): "No state in the Union has yet adopted a definite policy for the preservation of natural wild nature for historic, educational, scenic or scientific purposes. To gain public financial support for such reservations not to be used intensively by large crowds of people, is the practical problem that awaits solution."

However, progress has been made towards educational use by the public of areas that are wild though not un-

touched. The presence of trailside museums in parks of several states (Appendix P) bears witness to this. Other states are coming into the work. Georgia, in developing nine state parks in 1935, made plans for museum buildings in all of them. But some important opportunities are being overlooked. Most of the so-called natural wonders in the East—limestone caves, natural bridges, scenic gorges, sand dunes, and the like, are exploited for profit by individuals and companies, without regard for educational possibilities. States should be responsible for these places, and should acquire them by condemnation proceedings if necessary. There seems to be the proper legal background for this—as in Virginia, where “the State commission on conservation and development shall have full power and authority to acquire by gift or purchase or by the exercise of the power of eminent domain, areas . . . of scenic beauty, . . . remarkable phenomena or any other unusual features . . .” (Michie’s 1930 Code, Section 585-47).

Preservation of historic sites is closely related, administratively, to nature conservation. In this work New York has been the pioneer, with experience of nearly 90 years; but 26 states have done something. Of late this activity has reached bulking proportions.

Administrative arrangements vary greatly from state to state. *New York* has placed her once chaotic supervision of battlefields, forts, old houses, monuments, and markers—along with state parks and other reservations—under the State Council of Parks, in the Conservation Department, assisted by regional park commissions and a few custodian boards and societies. An important arrangement here is that the director of the State Museum and the state historian are members of the Council of Parks. *Ohio* has divided its charges between two agencies—the State Museum having custody of archaeological

and historical memorials, and the State Department of Conservation (in some cases the Highway Department) having control of forest, scenic, and wild life preserves. Of properties under the State Museum there are now 32, ranging in size from small plots to parks of more than 300 acres, all administered under direct appropriation. *Virginia* has the Bureau of Archaeology and History under the Commission on Conservation and Development. Museum work in this state has only just begun although marking of sites along highways is advanced. *Indiana* has done good work, at Spring Mill State Park for example, directly through the Conservation Department. *Illinois* began back in 1887 by saving Lincoln's Springfield home, and now the reconstruction of New Salem in a state park is the beginning of activity under the Department of Public Works and Bridges. *Kentucky* blossomed out recently with six memorial parks holding old houses, all under the Park Commission. *California* administers a number of historic houses through its Division of Parks. And 19 other states (Arizona, Connecticut, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin, and Wyoming) have one or more historic house museums each, some in state parks.

From this bare outline it will be seen that at least two branches of state government have interests near to museums. The conservation or park department, concerned with care and recreational use of land, finds much in common with the state museum, which should be concerned with preservation and educational use of sites—natural, archaeological, and historical—and of historic houses and other museums belonging to the state. The two interests cannot be dissociated entirely because many



of the sites and museums are located in park areas having problems of engineering, forestry, sanitation, and policing that are foreign to education.

Some administrative adjustment should be possible in such cases. The simplest arrangement would be for the state museum to have custody of sites and museums in parks, with the privilege of delegating the responsibility to a local organization where desirable. How well the custody plan works has been seen in connection with historic house museums (page 70); and a similar arrangement for a trailside has worked well for the Bear Mountain Trailside Museums in the Palisades Interstate Park, which are operated by the American Museum.

But in New York the state historian and the director of the State Museum have put forward in print a different scheme as to State Policy for Historic and Scientific Reservations (Two papers under similar titles in the *New York State Museum Bulletin* 284, 1929, 61-67 and 68-71). The proposal is that a State Council of Historical and Scientific Reservations be set up to administer all properties of the two kinds. The members would be, in general terms, the directors of the state museum and state division of history—both of whom in New York would represent also the Department of Education—and ten or more others appointed to represent leading interested societies and institutions, state or local. The Council would elect officers, recommend budgets, and have effect through a bureau, or office, under a director with two assistant directors, for the historical and scientific sides of the work, and associates in engineering and architecture. This plan recognizes the need for special supervision of historic and scientific wards, but it could hardly be recommended generally since it assigns to a new agency responsibilities that should be assumed by the state museum itself.

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETIES have been formed in all but a few of the states (Appendix G). The oldest, the Massachusetts society, was started in 1791 and others followed in each decade up to the 1900's. Some of the western societies, as well as the eastern, are old—those of Indiana and Ohio from the 1830's and of Wisconsin and Minnesota from the 1840's.

Two types have appeared—each with about a score of societies. Examples of the older type are statewide in membership and in scope of collections; but they have no official standing in the government, although some receive small state appropriations. This plan is best known in the East, and examples of it, among many, are the societies of New Jersey and Maryland, Rhode Island and Delaware—the first two without, the last two with, state aid. Societies of the second type are tied up closely with government as quasi-public establishments. Most of them are western. In Wisconsin, with a representative example, the state holds title to the State Historical Society's property and has made the society its trustee. Societies of this kind occupy state-owned buildings or have rooms in the capitol, the state university, or the state office building. They have state officials or appointees on the board, and they receive appropriations from the legislature.

In the matter of function these two types are not as different as is often supposed. Some societies of each group are interested solely in library work, research, and publication. Iowa has a state-linked society and Pennsylvania an independent endowed society of this proclivity. Some of each group have museum programs and are interested in direct educational work. Minnesota has a state-linked society and New Hampshire an endowed society of this sort. It is true that among the state-affiliated societies one finds the three outstanding ex-

amples of well-rounded program (in Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin), but these are the places where one finds also largest state support. States are doing ever better as time goes by. In 1876, according to Eaton, only the following appropriations were made: Minnesota \$500; Iowa \$2,500; Wisconsin \$7,000; total \$10,000. Now the list shows upwards of a score of states making appropriations totaling more than \$200,000.

In Ohio and Colorado the society runs the state museum. This ought not to be a favorable arrangement although it works admirably for both history and science in Ohio. Ordinarily it would seem desirable to have the historical society turn over its museum collections to a separate state museum, and itself keep to books and documents. In this respect it differs from the local and the county society.

The best affiliation of the society is with the state department of archives and history, which like a society has a more natural work with books and documents than with museum objects. Since 1900, departments of this kind have been set up in all of the states that have no state society. Only in the absence of strong state museums have these agencies made efforts in the museum direction—as in Arkansas, Michigan, Mississippi, and North Carolina. In Indiana, with only a weak museum, the Historical Bureau has been exceptionally active in leadership of history museums, promoting county appropriations through state enactments, giving technical help and information to small societies, making surveys, and generally doing much of what a state museum should.

## MUSEUMS AND THE NATION

### CHAPTER VIII

THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS at Washington, under the Smithsonian Institution, form an uneven group. They are diverse in policy, unequal in importance, and widely disparate in physical character and accommodations. As a system, though old, they are retarded in some lines of development. Yet they are strong in many collections; and they have great prestige with the people of the country, by whom their controlling institution is held in something akin to reverence.

The first unit is the United States National Museum, dating from 1850. Its departments of geology, biology, and anthropology—occupying a \$3,500,000 edifice, the natural history building of 1911—are strong in collections and could properly be named collectively the National Museum of Science. Its department of engineering and industries, in a now outmoded building of 1881, is essentially the National Museum of Industry. History has no department but only a subordinate division, although—in justice to the importance of its field—it might well be made into the National Museum of History.

Art is represented by three museums: the newly organized National Gallery of Art established through gifts of Andrew W. Mellon, the Freer Gallery of Art, and the National Collection of Fine Arts. The first of these, by its assured greatness in the field of paintings, has now allayed the criticism that for many years was heaped upon Washington for being “about as important as Liverpool, Caen, Strasbourg, Rotterdam and Bonn.”

It puts the city among the first half-dozen art capitals of the world.

The National Collection of Fine Arts, with early beginnings, was called the National Gallery of Art from 1906 until 1937 when its title was taken away. It has no home of its own, but occupies borrowed space in the natural history building where it shows what it can of an indifferent collection. This branch has long embodied the hopes of the many who want to see a comprehensive national art museum developed, and now it seems destined to make real progress in giving those hopes fulfillment. In 1938 Congress authorized the assigning of a site and the construction of a Smithsonian Gallery of Art to house collections of "paintings, sculptures, tapestry, furniture, jewelry, and other types of art," and in 1939 an architectural competition was held. Into this building would go the present National Collection, as a nest-egg. The establishment, as projected, has every right to be renamed the National Museum of Art. In the role of "American Luxembourg," it would give attention to contemporary arts—fine and decorative, of this country and others—and as a comprehensive museum it would represent all the arts of the past. Incidentally it would include a national portrait gallery for pictures of eminent men and women. The entire building is expected to cost \$6,000,000—the first unit, \$1,500,000.

The National Gallery of Art, occupying a site beside the natural history building, will cost more than \$12,000,000 and upon completion will receive the Mellon collection, chiefly of European paintings valued at \$19,000,000 and planned for filling out so as fully to cover the history of European and American painting and its sources.

The Freer Gallery of Art, is a special museum in the Oriental field, occupying a well-designed \$1,125,000 building of 1923. It has the justly famous Charles L.



Freer collection, and resources for purchase of other objects of Far Eastern art.

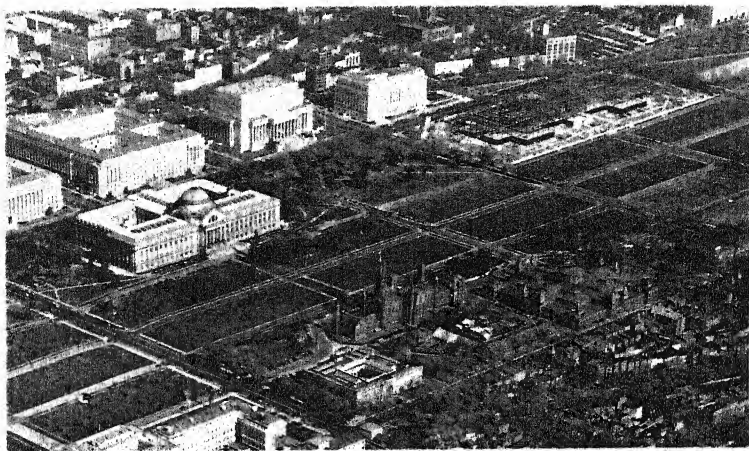
This completes the roster. The collections of these museums are beyond price. The physical plant as now constituted—but not counting the obsolete arts and industries building or the Smithsonian building used chiefly for library and administration—represents an outlay of \$16,625,000; and the natural history building is to have new wings when Congress appropriates \$6,500,000 for additions that have been authorized. The arts and industries building, happily, is doomed by changes planned for the Mall, and will have to be replaced at an outlay of at least \$6,000,000—or more if there can be two new buildings for separate museums of history and industry. This whole is already the most extensive group of museum buildings under any one control, and it may soon be equal in cost to all the museum buildings in the City of New York today.

The annual support of these national museums is substantial, though—like all museum income—inadequate. In 1938 Congress appropriated \$775,720 to the National Museum; the largest amount for any year was \$830,394 given in 1930. Only two museums in the country have larger incomes than this—the Metropolitan Museum and the American Museum in New York, each of which, however, receives for operations from all sources more than twice as much as the National Museum gets from the nation. Appropriations to the national art museums have been small, but in accepting the Mellon gift Congress committed itself to providing in future “such funds as may be necessary.” The Freer Gallery is endowed with \$4,700,000 of principal yielding a large purchase fund and operating income of more than \$50,000 yearly. The National Gallery of Art has endowment of \$5,000,000 which also will provide for purchases and part

of operating expense. Unlike most public museums, the national museums do not receive gifts of money from members and contributors.

The Smithsonian Institution, which presides over this system, is not a museum although part of its romantic Renwick building is lent for museum purposes. It is a scientific research foundation with a history full of great names and achievements that have advanced science. Governed by a board of regents—with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court as Chancellor, and including the Vice-President of the United States, members of both houses of Congress and citizens of the District of Columbia and four states—the institution is as conservative as it is distinguished. The holding body for the national museums, it has control of all these units except the new National Gallery of Art. This Gallery, though nominally a bureau of the institution, has its own self-perpetuating board. The National Collection of Fine Arts has an advisory commission.

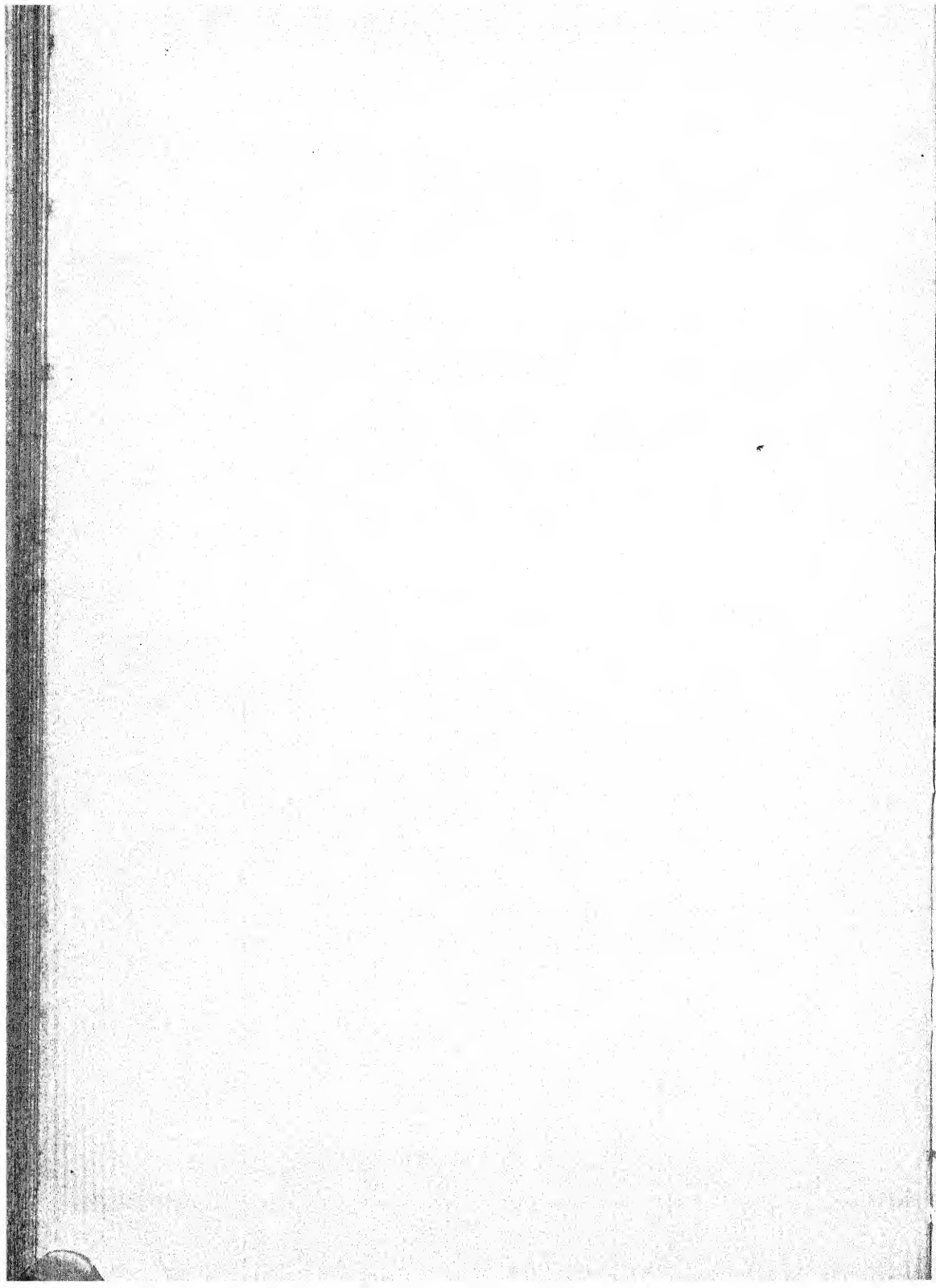
The several museums differ widely in what they do. The National Museum is concerned in large part with the increase and care of its collections that already come to 16,000,000 items, and also with research that is guided chiefly by these curatorial interests. In the 1890's, under the leadership of G. Brown Goode, the National Museum exercised a strong influence upon other museums through its then advanced work in exhibition, but this leadership has not been maintained. In active educational service, the museum has hardly taken the first steps, although it does give much duplicate material to schools in different parts of the country and its halls are visited by students as well as the public. The Freer Gallery is even more closely devoted to curatorial work. Its installation—thanks in part to its modern building—is excellent; but there is no educational program. The



*Photo by Aero Service Corporation*

**SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION AND ITS MUSEUMS**

**WASHINGTON**



National Collection of Fine Arts is almost passive. The new National Gallery of Art has not declared itself as yet.

This system, though old, is so young in some of its branches and so undeveloped in others that it seems appropriate to raise questions about what the general policy of the national museums should be.

A NATIONAL MUSEUM POLICY would, in the nature of things, grow out of a few major considerations. In what respects should a national museum differ from a leading community museum in character and work? By what administrative means can the desirable arrangements be assured? What is the duty of the national museums to other museums of the country? What relationships should they establish with kindred activities of the federal government? These are all subjects for discussion, not for pronouncement. Yet certain views are held so widely and expressed so commonly that they might be taken as a framework in planning.

On the first question—as to the individuality of a national museum—no theory must overlook the fact that great museums in New York and elsewhere are as broad in scope of collections and influence as any museum of the nation can possibly be. In some lines, Washington may—and does—have the best collections; but the national museums have no transcendent claim on any field of subject matter, however special or however wide. They are simply custodians of collections belonging to the nation—collections that serve as the nation's records of the world, that should aim to be full on as many sides as possible, and that ought to be entirely adequate in their representation of the United States. For science,



this ideal is well on the way to being realized in most branches. For art, it is poorly carried out despite great strength in the specialities covered by the Freer and Mellon gifts. For industry, it is approached within the limits set by a selective policy—recording main lines of development through domestic examples except as things from abroad may be needed to trace beginnings. For history, the world is little touched and our own country is represented spottily and with personal memorabilia rather more than with chosen culture material.

Through its permanent exhibits, a national museum might be expected first of all to reflect the homeland. In this respect it would differ from a local or a state museum, however general, and also from a great encyclopedic museum that undertakes to reflect all countries without especial attention to America. Actually, the national museums do not follow any plan of exhibition that is markedly different from their several courses in collecting; and, as noted, collecting policies meet the principle suggested for exhibits only in the field of industry.

As to the *manner* of exhibition, the national museums have the plain duty of being technically superlative. This they owe to the people who support them, and to the many museums of the country that should be able to look to them for guidance and example. Here the museums at Washington leave much to be desired.

In educational work, these museums have a double responsibility—to the nation and to the capital city. The country at large comes to the museums in a tourist throng of a million or more a year. For this mingling of nearly all the kinds of people there are in the 48 states, the museums—having put on good displays—should explain them ably. Visitors, many of them not well educated, are having their attitudes toward science, art,

and history, and toward education, shaped by what they find in these greatly revered museums. This is a serious trust, and it should be met with good exhibits well labeled and well interpreted at least by guide lectures and simple fitting publications. But this would not suffice to serve the city of Washington—which, by the way, is the largest city in the country without a single museum working actively through the schools, and the only place larger than Jersey City (23rd in the census list) of which this can be said. Washington is the ward of the federal government. What the nation gives it in the way of institutional development tends to preempt the field. To be sure the city has its local public library in addition to the national Library of Congress; but local museums have been held back. There is no science museum of the District of Columbia, and the Corcoran Art Gallery has not grown on the educational side. Unless the national museums can foster community museums to give local service, they have the duty of serving Washington themselves.

In research, the national museums should stand at the top. This has long been the aim of their parent institution—an aim that has been unevenly realized.

The second major question—as to administrative provision—would seem to call for some reorganization of the system. Applied science, including industry, should become the National Museum of Industry; and history should have its separate National Museum of History. These institutions, with the National Museum of Science and a comprehensive National Museum of Art, would give the nation a balanced group of institutions representing the large divisions of the museum field—rather than accidents of administrative history. Special museums, of which there are already the two for art from the gifts of Freer and Mellon, would doubtless be increased in

number from time to time. In general, it is not desirable that personal memorials be made in this way, or that specialties be overlapped or delimited very narrowly. The pattern for such museums will have to be worked out in the light of circumstances, but two units may come by design—one, a National Museum of Modern Art to relieve the comprehensive museum and the special museums of art of an otherwise difficult problem, and the other, a separate National Portrait Gallery to deal realistically with this marginal field that is partly art and largely history—not to mention politics.

If the museums could be set up in some such way as this, and be well administered, money should be attracted more strongly than in past. Congress has not equally supported the different branches, as now set up; and it has not supported any branch well. Orpheus, with his poetry, drew iron tears from the eyes of Pluto; if the national museums too were inspired they might move the gods of Congress. Further, private support in the form of a membership body contributing toward the increase of collections, or for other purposes, might be developed if there were a disposition to remove whatever legal barriers may now block the way. National museums of other countries have built up powerful societies, notably the *Société des Amis du Louvre*, the *Kaiser Friedrich-Museums-Verein*, the members of the National Art-Collections Fund, and the Friends of the British Museum.

In view of the challenging opportunities before the national museums, and the many problems of planning they have to solve, the United States could not go far wrong in taking a leaf out of Great Britain's book. A decade ago—in 1927—the British Crown appointed a Royal Commission on National Museums and Art Galleries to "enquire into and report on the legal position,

organization, administration, accommodation, the structural condition of the buildings, and general cost of the institutions containing the National collections." This commission made exhaustive studies and issued a series of reports that have led to great improvements and a better understanding of national museums in the British Isles. By arranging for a like study of our own national museums, through a competent group over here, the regents of the Smithsonian Institution could serve their nation well.

The third major question has to do with relations between the national museums and other museums throughout the country. This has been touched upon in the discussion above. The museums should give a good example and progressive leadership along much the same lines that state museums are beginning to offer museums in their states. The national institutions might set up active cooperation with state museums, and help to found or build up state museums where they are weak or lacking. Through state museums, or directly if necessary, the national museums should send adequate teaching material and lend exhibits to local museums. Their natural sphere of cooperation is that of help with museum collections, balancing on the curatorial side what the American Association of Museums, with its headquarters at the Smithsonian Institution, does on the administrative side by giving help and guidance. At present the National Museum does give away each year, mostly to schools direct, a quantity of duplicate science material; and it is generous about lending from its collections for research. As far as it goes—in response to calls that happen to be made—this is good work. But what seems to be needed further is a program, actively carried out, for the advancement of museums.

Fourthly, and finally, there is the question of relation-

ships between the national museums and other museum work of the federal government. In the fields of art, science, and history the government has important new activities in which the national museums should be equal to taking part.

In art there is a nationwide popular movement, initiated in 1933 by the government's program of emergency relief that set painters, sculptors, and craftsmen to decorating publicly owned buildings and doing other art work at wages of about \$35 a week. This came to be after Artist George Biddle had written the President, when work relief began. Mexico, said he, had developed the greatest school of mural painting since the Renaissance because President Obregon allowed Mexican artists to work at plumbers' wages in expressing, on the walls of government buildings, the social ideals of the Mexican revolution; and, he added, our own artists—given an impetus from the government—might make a live expression of ideals rising out of our crisis. Shortly thereafter, came the Public Works of Art Project that spent more than \$1,300,000 in a few months and got some 15,600 works from 3,700 artists. Then in the fall of 1935, the government—through the Works Progress Administration, its emergency organization of that moment—began the rapid spending of \$27,000,000 in order that 30,000 painters, writers, musicians, actors, and technical assistants might be employed at wages of from \$75 to \$94 a month. Meanwhile the Treasury Department had set up a Painting and Sculpture Section (now the Section of Fine Arts) to continue procuring art works of quality for public buildings in such a way as to stimulate local talent and develop the country's art. All this has drawn criticism, but on the whole it has been successful and has launched the people into a telling experience.

In the wake of these developments have come renewed



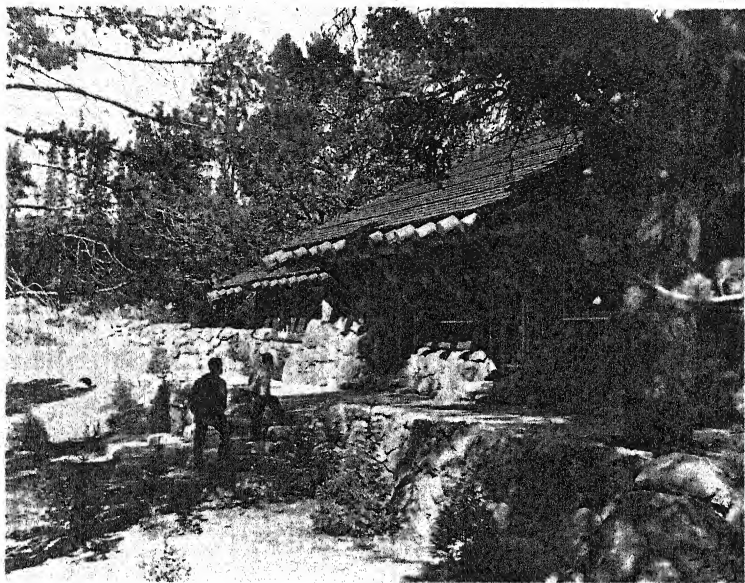
efforts to set up a permanent federal department for the arts—a move that competent observers have advised against again and again. “We have no national ministry of art,” say Keppel and Duffus in their *Recent Social Trends Monograph*, “nor would it be easy to determine what, under our system of government and with our traditions, such a ministry could do if created.” (*The Arts in American Life*, McGraw Hill, 1933). Advocates of the idea cite foreign precedent, but the prevailing sentiment has been against such a department under a secretary in the President’s cabinet; and, said the press, “the public at large would be vastly skeptical of any group that approved.” The most recent contribution to this subject is a book by Grace Overmyer (*Government and the Arts*. Norton, 1939) setting forth what our country and others are doing, and bringing together statistics for Europe not hitherto readily available.

A considerable part of what is sought in this way could be achieved through an active national museum of art. From the first the government has looked to local museums for heading community art projects under work relief; and, similarly, the nation should be able to count on its national museum for broad interest in all the arts and leadership of the popular movement.

In the fields of science and history, there are developments in national parks that suggest need for relations between the national museum of science and the U. S. Department of the Interior much like relations that exist between progressive state museums and state park departments (Chapter VII). There is cooperation at present, but this does not face the essential new problem which is administrative—and, as things have developed, perhaps not possible of early solution.

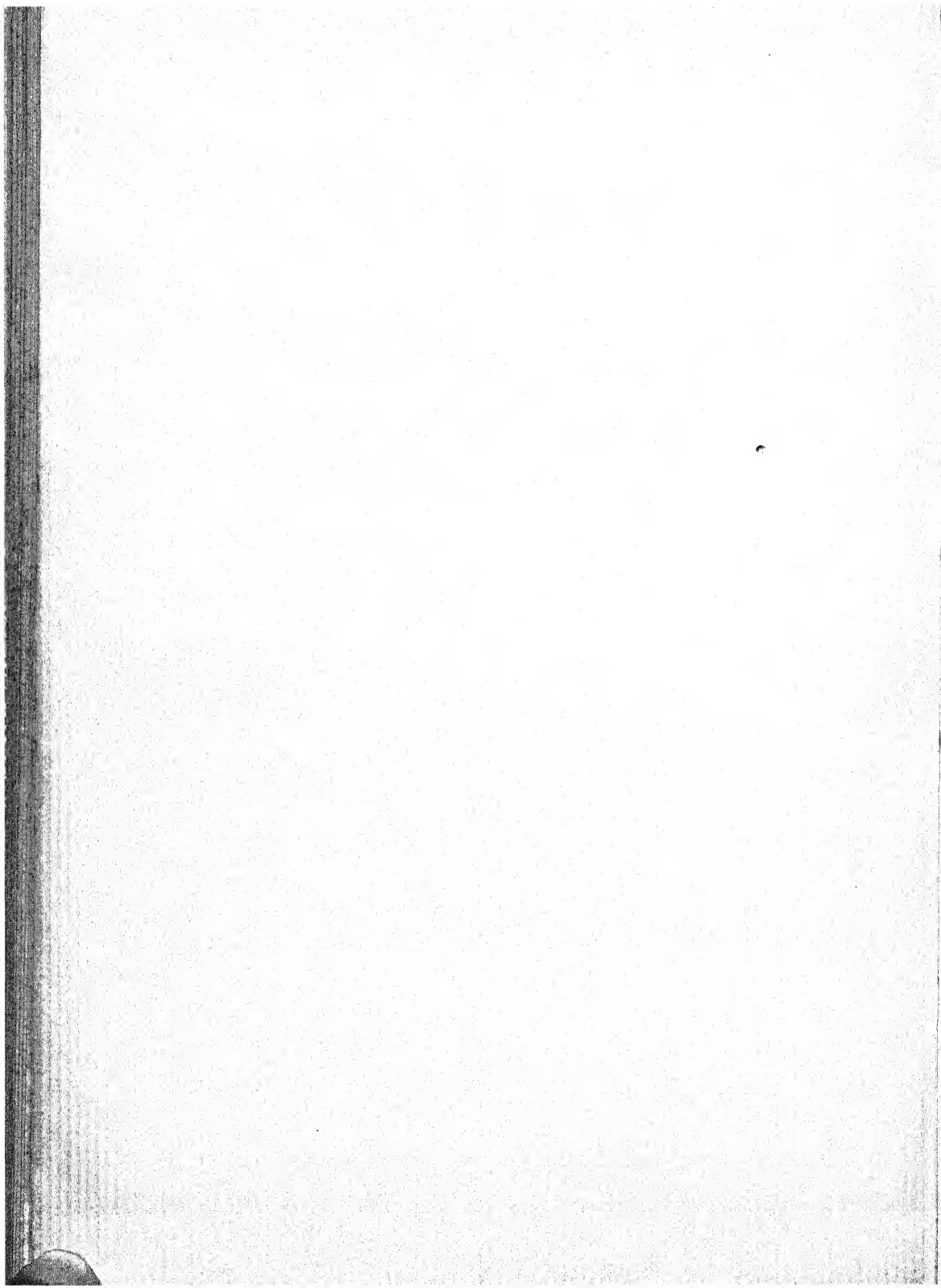
**P**ARK SERVICE MUSEUMS form a distinct administrative family of growing importance. They include trailside museums of science and history in national parks and other reservations controlled by the National Park Service (Appendix P), besides an increasing number of historic house museums, in parks and out, and the beginnings of what may become a chain of public museums in Washington and other cities. These several kinds of museums have been considered in other chapters. Suffice it here to note an effect on the national reservations, and certain influences coming to bear, through the personnel of the bureau responsible for them, on museum people generally.

The trailside museums have done a very great deal to gain recognition for the educational values of national parks. On this general subject a committee, appointed in 1928 by the Secretary of the Interior to study educational problems in national parks, expressed the opinion that "the distinctive or essential characters of National Parks lie in the inspirational influence and educational value of the exceptional natural features which constitute the reason for existence of these parks. Outdoor recreation is recognized as an important factor in National Park administration, but it is not the primary purpose, and can also be enjoyed through abundant opportunities furnished elsewhere. While primitive regions cannot be provided to an extent sufficient for the future outdoor recreation needs of the whole people, those primitive areas with features of especial inspirational significance and educational value should be protected in their fully primitive condition as National Parks." This may seem obvious now, but a few years ago it was unorthodox to put education ahead of recreation in this way. In fact it still is straining a point from the public's angle, and probably always will be; for the people who visit parks



*Photo by Carl P. Russell*  
LAKE TRAILSIDE MUSEUM

YELLOWSTONE



go to them for pleasure, say what the educators will. This is not in the least unfortunate, as education is never better placed than when it comes naturally in the course of leisure; one of the greatest strengths of trailside museums is their recreational setting. However, from the angle of the park administrator education can be seen as the essential. And from the same viewpoint the museum appears in its true importance, for it is the park's educational headquarters.

The group of men concerned with park museums is becoming ever stronger. From a few workers in the early 'twenties, the educational staff of the service has now grown to 123 ranger naturalists, temporary and permanent, and 36 ranger historians, all concerned with museums and many ranking as strictly museum personnel. There is also a varying administrative and technical force at Washington and at two field stations of which one in California has more than 300 helpers on relief. Public museums are giving men to responsible posts in this work; and—what is more important—they are taking men from the parks. The philosophy of outdoor education is percolating into the thought of museum people everywhere. It is significant therefore, as Bumpus has said, that here is "a new and large group of young and professionally trained men who are not primarily interested in quantitatively collecting, killing, preserving, transporting, storing, and exhibiting what have been called specimens, but who are primarily interested in qualitatively protecting, conserving and perpetuating natural conditions . . . to the end that those who so desire may enjoy the privilege of direct contact with original objective sources of information." (*The Museum News*, June 15, 1937).

As a large body of museum workers administering a system of scattered institutions, the museum personnel of the Park Service may be able to exert a further helpful



influence on museums generally. When men leave the employ of the service and find places in other museums they carry with them the habit of thinking in terms of more than one museum. It has long been recognized that small museums located near together might have a director in common and that such an arrangement could solve financial problems and bring effectiveness to otherwise very limited little establishments. This knowledge may now have a better chance of being acted upon, here and there, by way of good example. Such an outcome would seem to be further favored by plans that are now afoot for the correlation of park museums to represent successive chapters of history and sequences of subjects in science.

**C**LASSIFYING HISTORIC STRUCTURES is a European practice that has not yet been developed in this country. However, something kindred to it is about to be brought forth among us under new legislation affecting the Department of the Interior and crystalizing about the historic properties already in control of the National Park Service.

European classification affects buildings in both private and public ownership. It puts the structure that should be preserved into a class of buildings protected by special laws for historic monuments. A house so classed and protected cannot be altered by its owner without the government's consent, and it cannot be destroyed deliberately. When repairs or additions are made, an official architect advises. The owner is not deprived of his title or of the use of the property for purposes considered legitimate by the state. He may sell the house, with the government's approval. If any loss is sustained

through these restrictions the owner receives an indemnity, and in any event the state bears part of the expense of upkeep through tax reduction or otherwise. This practice is well established in Great Britain and in France, Belgium, Italy, and many other countries on the Continent.

In our own country we have not yet reached the point of recognizing the interests of the people as superior to the rights of the individual except in the sphere of police action and, in a limited way, with respect to zoning. Nor have we yet granted the federal government the right to intervene in the separate states as freely as the European system of classification requires. However, by an act of Congress in 1935—the so-called Historic Sites Act—it became “a national policy to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States.” Under this law the Secretary of the Interior, through the National Park Service, is charged with the functions of gathering information for reference; determining by survey and research what historic and archaeological buildings and sites are of exceptional value for illustrating the history of the nation; acquiring suitable properties by gift, purchase, or otherwise; maintaining, restoring, and operating them, or contracting for similar attentions to these and other properties with states, cities, private agencies, or individuals—agencies to be incorporated for the purpose if needed; and, finally, developing an educational program, with provision for museums. (Public Law No. 292—74th Congress).

This law represents the experience of states with historic house museums, applied to the case of the nation in the light of European practice. It reflects the custody plan of cooperation between state and local society; and, happily, the National Park Service has made plain its

intention—contemplated by the law—neither to acquire nor to operate, save in the exceptional case, if responsibility can be carried by some other agency.

Following our tradition of letting those who are most interested share most largely in the burden of a public program, rather than to depend entirely on taxation, Congress enacted a supplementary law (Public Law No. 201—74th Congress) setting up a National Park Trust Fund Board to receive and administer gifts and bequests. The fund, started at once with a gift of \$5,000, should help to solve the problem of rescuing important houses threatened with demolition, as well as that of acquiring properties more deliberately.

The point at which America's plan falls far short of Europe's is in respect to structures in private ownership and still in use as churches, homes, or whatever they may be. We should have some way of taking care of such places, and it may come as something like a tenant plan (page 76). The law allows for this in a clause (Section 2e) concerning contract with agencies *or individuals*, with proper bond if deemed advisable, for care and operation of places, "*regardless as to whether the title thereto is in the United States.*" Under this authority it may be possible to go very far.

The national government has assumed responsibility for survey and record in two different ways. A branch of the National Park Service, under authority of the Historic Sites Act, is making an unpublicised study of properties throughout the country with a view to ascertaining what the nation should own. This is an important work that, unfortunately, is all too much hampered by the burden of administering properties already in the nation's care. Meanwhile there has grown up under the Works Progress Administration, what was conceived in 1933 as a temporary effort—the Historic American Buildings

Survey—financed by emergency funds. This organization had the services at one time during the depression of 775 draughtsmen and others, and it has been able to deposit in the Library of Congress about 17,000 sheets of drawings and 19,000 photographs from 4,750 structures; but the work is only just begun. The task goes forward now under a compact between the Park Service that gives materials and central supervision, the American Institute of Architects that names representatives making up a corps of district officers, and the Library of Congress that acts as depository of the records and sees to their use. Several thousand photographic prints from negatives and drawings are supplied to the public yearly (8,000 in 1937-38). In this work state museums should be able to take an important part for their respective territories.

History conservation has international aspects to which attention has been given through the creation, recently, of the International Historical Monuments Commission, under the League of Nations; the United States is represented by the director of the National Park Service. The Commission grew out of an international congress, held at Athens in 1931 by the International Museums Office, from which there came a general understanding of the work of different countries and some consensus of opinion as to methods. ("The Protection and Preservation of Artistic and Historical Monuments" by E. Foudoukidis, *The Museum News*, March 1, 1932; and *La Conservation des Monuments d'Art et d'Histoire*, Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle, Paris, 1933.)

The word *monument*, in America, has an official connotation that our own public and the rest of the world hardly know. With us, a national monument is one kind of national reservation—a small land area. An early step might well be the elimination of this term *in its*

*narrow use* from the terminology of the national government and from the proper names of the areas it describes so poorly. At the same time, another salutary move would be to put a ban on distracting, if not ugly, stone and bronze cenotaphs (which are what the public means by *monuments*) from our national historic areas. In a city or town such a memorial may be a thing of sentiment, but in a hallowed national reservation a pile of masonry can but detract from authentic remains or the simple setting.



## MUSEUMS OF SCHOOLS

### CHAPTER IX

SCHOOL MUSEUMS, or teaching collections of individual schools, are not numerous; and only a few are important. Out of 35 on record (Appendix I), five are art museums, all of which are outstanding; and about a score are science museums, two of which are outstanding. Some of the smaller museums include history material, and history itself has a few unimportant museums. There is a lone commercial museum in New York's High School of Commerce.

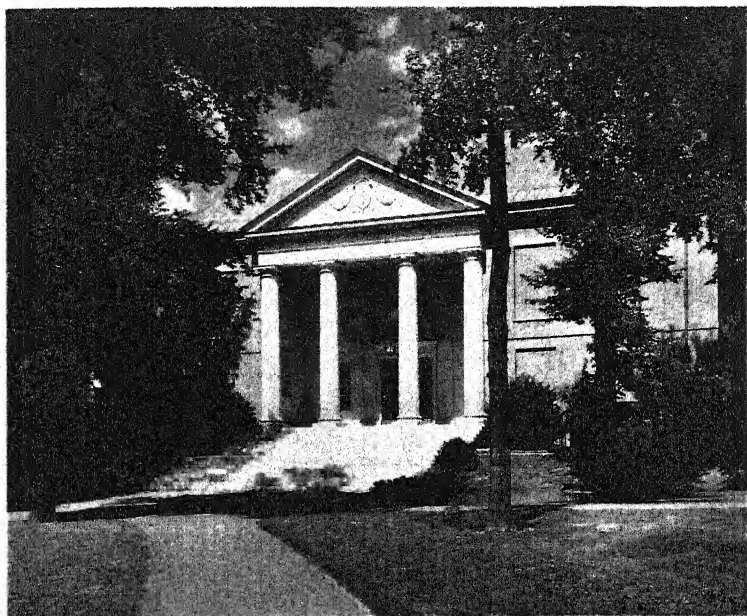
Secondary schools have all the outstanding examples. Private preparatory schools make the best showing with three of the five best art museums (Addison Gallery of American Art of Phillips Academy at Andover, another at Andover, and one at Elgin); and both of the two best science museums (at Andover and Concord). Public high schools have the other two good art museums (at Norwich, and Springville). All seven of these museums have their own buildings, and are much like college museums in general character.

It is often predicted that small teaching museums in public schools are destined to multiply greatly—an idea suggested perhaps by the rapid rise of school libraries, supplementing what the public libraries do for the schools. This may turn out to be so, but there is little indication of it as yet. To be sure, there are many unrecorded collections of "visual paraphernalia," sometimes kept by the school librarian. And also there are many informal gatherings of things brought in by children during the

school year and thrown out in summer. But progress with formal school museums cannot be made unless teachers are prepared for the work and assigned to it definitely. School libraries have grown chiefly because they have been given the necessary supervision. Says the American Library Association: "a school library is an essential of the modern school, and expert librarianship is the most important element in effective school library service." Lacking the required care, some good collections that museums have given to schools have fallen into disorder or been abandoned.

Successful museum service to public schools has been developed in a general way only by centers outside the individual school. It comes from the public museums and from a few school-system museums; and it takes the form of short-term lending for immediate teaching purposes (Chapter XX). Service of this kind (to say nothing of class visits to museums) would be required even if individual school museums were common, since only certain kinds of material are needed frequently enough to be kept on hand everywhere. Through cooperative use, however, a wide selection can be made available.

**S**CHOOL-SYSTEM MUSEUMS are service museums set up by the school board for all the schools of a city. There are only eight of them (Appendix J). The oldest and largest, developed by the late Carl G. Rathmann, is the Educational Museum of the St. Louis Public Schools, established in 1905. (A year earlier, at Reading, Pennsylvania, there had been organized the visual education department of the schools, which in time became the Reading Public Museum and Art Gallery, essentially a community museum though run by the school board, like an older museum at Battle



*Photo by George H. Davis Studio, Boston*  
ADDISON GALLERY OF AMERICAN ART

ANDOVER



Creek and some others.) After the St. Louis museum—next to it now in size—came the Educational Museum of the Cleveland Public Schools, established in 1910. Of the six others started since, three were begun in the 1930's. The most recent is New York's museum created by work relief and made up of six scattered Teaching Centers.

Unlike children's museums (which in Cambridge, Detroit, and Duluth are under school boards), school-system museums attend chiefly to the *teacher's* routine needs. Like the many so-called visual education departments of the schools, which are offices to circulate lantern slides and motion picture films, they are concerned with supplying museum materials for classroom use. Their work is done by motor truck or messenger. They may have exhibits that classes can come to see, but even the material on display may be subject to borrowing, and at St. Louis the permanent exhibits form a visual catalog of what the museum has in stock to lend. The Cleveland museum attempts no exhibits at all.

School-system museums raise the important question of whether museum service is a school department responsibility. Many public museums carry on this work effectively; and, since they make their case for public support partly on the strength of it, they might object to any question of whether it is their role or that of the schools themselves. In view of the very conservative and defensive attitude of most school superintendents, museums may well hold that their initiative is needed; but in several cities the schools have long been doing the work well for themselves, and this fact does raise the issue unmistakably.

The right outcome seems to be a division. There are two types of museum-school relations—lending to teachers, and museum instruction of classes. The first



may well be taken over in the end by school systems; the second will surely remain the duty of public museums. The function of museum instruction could not be taken over by school-system museums unless they practically transformed themselves into rounded public museums. Lending, on the other hand, is a routine function, and the school department should take care of it like any other ordinary business of its own. Curators may say that the preparation and care of illustrative material is museum work, but this is so in only a limited way. Museums have no monopoly of model making, picture mounting, and the like; and even taxidermy can be done by a taxidermist in school employ. Besides, the school budget of a city is better able to meet the cost of circulation than the educational budget of a museum. Earnestly as the museums may try to meet demands, they cannot cope with them *fully* anywhere. They are doing an excellent work in converting principals, supervisors, and teachers to the need for objects to make lessons real; but there the duty should end. If museum advice is required in planning collections, surely it will be given; but teachers ought to know better than curators what the teachers have to do.

Teachers need training in the use of museum material, and that too museums may properly give until the teachers colleges do what they should in this line.

## COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS

### CHAPTER X

TEACHING COLLECTIONS of college departments and university schools are commonly the beginnings of important museums on campuses, although most of such collections have remained small and some of the large college and university museums have appeared full blown. There is no satisfactory way of drawing a line between collections and museums, as seemingly every stage of development is to be found. Among about 700 college and university museums (Appendix K), only 44 have museum buildings of their own; the rest occupy rooms in recitation buildings, libraries, or elsewhere.

By far the greatest number of small units are science collections. They reflect the scope of academic departments to which they are attached—those in colleges with general natural science departments being devoted to several sciences, and those belonging to geology, mineralogy, palaeontology, biology, zoology, entomology, botany, or anthropology departments being correspondingly specialized. Chemistry departments have collections in a dozen institutions, notably Columbia University. Two physics departments, at Chicago and Wisconsin, have small museums of physical science. And medical schools have anatomy and pathology collections that are mostly kept out of sight. Many of these teaching collections have official standing as named museums; but most of them are quite informal.

Some science departments keep their collections before the students by placing exhibition cases in hallways.

Sometimes cases are built into walls and illuminated artificially—an inflexible arrangement which, however, is very effectively carried out at the University of Nebraska. It is not important to make a display for the public, although sometimes teaching exhibits do attract the attention of visitors.

Keeping a collection in the building where it is used is better than installing it in a more remote place such as the library or administration building. In a college science building accommodating several departments, there may be separate rooms for several departmental museums, each near its own classrooms and laboratories. A few of such buildings have the museum rooms, on several floors, constructed as a vertical stack so that a sort of rudimentary museum building is developed—as at the University of Rochester. This is a very good plan, architecturally and for practical purposes.

Art teaching collections are of comparatively recent origin although some colleges have long owned objects of art (Chapter I). The early collections of classical material, brought together by departments of Greek and Latin, have mostly languished or been absorbed into the fine arts department museums that have sprung up from files of photographs, prints, and lantern slides. Sets of illustrated books and reproductions of art objects organized by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and made available to colleges during recent years have been a large factor in furthering this development.

The art collection may be inconspicuously quartered in the offices or classrooms of the fine arts department where it would hardly be noticed except for the fact that usually a department equal to forming such a collection is also up to providing space for temporary exhibitions that can be borrowed, made up from students' work, or drawn from the print collections. Thus a gallery room,

or hanging space in halls, forms part of the rudimentary art museum unit that is roughly equivalent to a science teaching collection. In the newer art instruction buildings on campuses, a well-lighted gallery room is provided—as at Iowa.

It is recognized as important for art collections to be kept separate from science collections, rather than for both to be merged into a general exhibit in the college library or somewhere else more or less remote from where they are needed as teaching equipment. There are, fortunately, only half a dozen of the small museums that deal with both art and science.

History departments are bookish, and few of them have gathered museum material. The American History Museum of Lawrence College at Appleton, Wisconsin, is the only considerable history collection related directly to teaching needs, although a score of history departments in other institutions have collections of general interest—some of them gift collections in biography and numismatics. Many of the older college museums of natural history have a little history material that has come to them in one way or another, but this is not working material and much of it is being cast off. However, the leaning of historians towards culture history has already moved a number of professors to make lantern slide collections of old houses, early American furniture, and decorative arts. These may be the beginnings of history teaching collections formed to meet teaching needs—perhaps, in turn, the beginnings of some college and university history museums that will compare in size and scope with the present outstanding museums of art and science.

History departments are calling more and more upon art museums in their institutions for illustrative material on loan. At Yale the Gallery of Fine Arts is sending

prints and etchings to history classrooms for what these pictures show of the spirit of other times. Similarly, culture material portraying the history of art portrays also the human settings in which the events that most concern history students have taken place.

In several universities are special history collections, like that of the new Stephen Collins Foster Memorial relating to the composer and his musical works, now at Pittsburgh, and the Edgar Fahs Smith Memorial Collection on the history of chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania. Such units are important as little research institutes of history, and they usually have some sentimental reason for being where they are. In many a theological seminary there is an accumulation of objects relating to church history and missionary endeavor. Much of *this* material is unimportant, but several collections—notably those of the Pacific School of Religion at Berkeley, California; the Bennett Museum of Christian Archaeology in Northwestern's Garrett Biblical Institute at Evanston, Illinois; and the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City—are of value to archaeological or historical scholarship. Finally, several engineering departments and schools have made exhibits of machinery that are really historical though they look like industry museum displays.

In short, a large number of science units and a smaller number of art units make up nearly all of the college and university museums that are best described as teaching collections because they are of modest proportions and humble official standing. The larger college and university museums are entitled to rank with public museums in size and importance. Most of them are of science or art; only three are general, including both art and science. History has as yet only the beginnings of a museum development.



THE LARGER SCIENCE MUSEUMS of colleges and universities number about 80 (all of which are given by name in Appendix K). Twenty-two of them have buildings (18 built for the purpose)—some bringing together the collections in mineralogy, geology, palaeontology, biology, and anthropology as at Harvard, Yale, and Michigan; others devoted to one science. Among those that do not have separate buildings are also some of importance. At the University of California, for example, the Museum of Anthropology is the only one of five science museums with a building of its own—the museums of geology, palaeontology, botany, and vertebrate zoology having special quarters in appropriate buildings on the campus. And there is Tulane's important Department of Middle American Research, still in temporary lodgings.

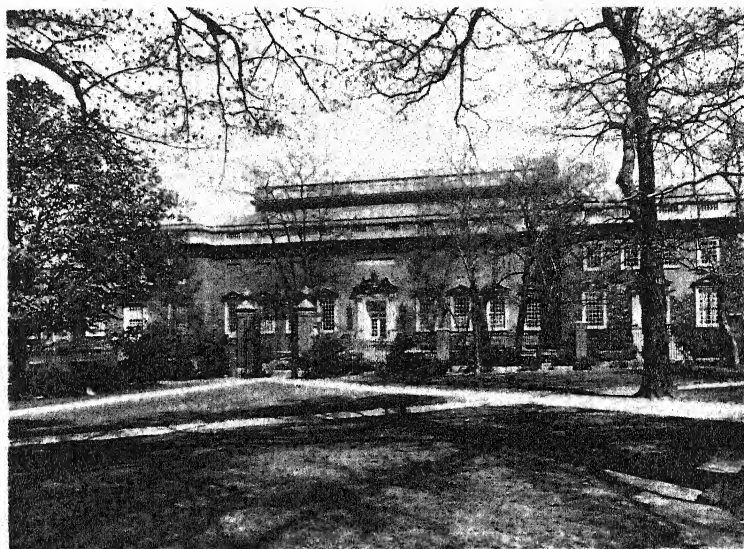
These museums have different administrative set-ups. Some have no separate organization, but are run by the departments to which they belong—the head professor being in charge, perhaps with an assistant professor as curator, and student or other assistants. This is the usual plan for museums that are hardly more than big teaching collections. Made more formal, it is the plan also for some important special museums of universities—Chicago and Princeton, for example—that have not consolidated their collections or given them centralized control. At California this plan of decentralization is seen at its best, with several of the museums comparatively well staffed and doing independent work.

The alternative plan—that of a consolidated unit—makes its simplest appearance in such as the Barnum Museum of Tufts College which covers biology and geology but is attached to biology only. In most places where the museum is for several departments, it is presided over by an interdepartmental committee and has

a professor-curator for each of its sciences. This is the plan of the Knox Museum of Hamilton College, and also of the Amherst College Museum.

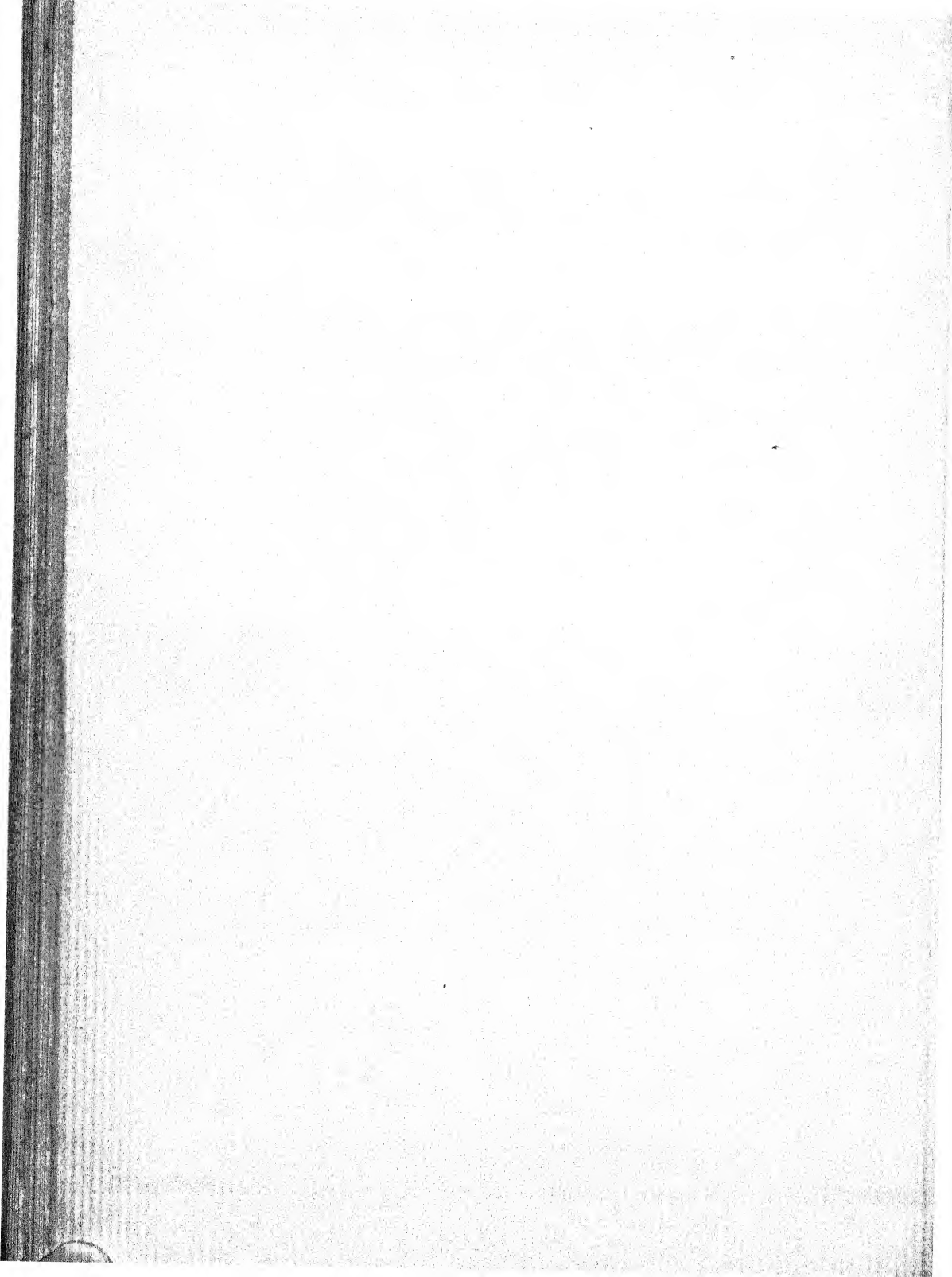
At six universities a comprehensive science museum is organized as a separate arm or department, under a director—at Harvard and Yale, and the state universities of Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, and Oregon. Harvard has her University Museum embracing museums of mineralogy, geology, and botany, along with the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology and Agassiz's great Museum of Comparative Zoology, all under one roof and one general director. Yale's Peabody Museum of Natural History, still more compactly organized, represents palaeontology, zoology, and anthropology. The University of Michigan has gone farthest towards centralization; all its science museum units have been brought together to form the central University Museums, for which a building was provided in 1928; and the director of museums has control also of separate museums in the field of art—an experiment worth watching.

Thus two different plans are emerging—decentralization as seen at Chicago, Princeton, and California, and centralization as seen best at Harvard, Yale, and Michigan. Choice between the two seems to turn on the question of what is primarily desired—whether a museum program as such, or an academic program using museums only as tools. The staff of a comprehensive and autonomous science museum tends to develop its research without primary attention to the needs of undergraduate teaching or the interests of other faculty members and their graduate students. Museum collecting usually brings in extensive systematic collections; and the related museum research in zoology and botany leans toward producing systematists rather than experimental biologists. Although the duality is less sharp in geology, palaeontology,



FOGG ART MUSEUM

CAMBRIDGE



and anthropology it is real in every science. This difficulty is not easily overcome by appointing professors to museum posts. Where a central museum has grown up, strong influences on the side of the museum as a separate entity have been at work in every case; at Harvard, the Agassiz tradition and the Peabody bequest ably supported by a line of museum men; at Yale, the Peabody endowment and the Marsh collection supported in the same way; at Michigan, the interest of President Alexander G. Ruthven, attested by his book (*A Naturalist in a University Museum*, Ann Arbor, 1931). Sometimes the experience of university libraries is brought to bear, since a central library has been built on nearly every university campus and this library presides over all the books of its institution. By inference it is reasoned that museum collections should be controlled in the same way; but this overlooks the fact that university departments and schools invariably have their own working libraries which are only nominally part of the general collection; and that volumes remaining in the central stacks can be borrowed and carried about easily. There is really not much parallel between the use of books and the use of museum objects. The question of a central museum has to be decided on its own merits, in the light of what is to be done in collecting, research, and publishing. For teaching and graduate studies, decentralization is the more workable plan.

**T**HE LARGER ART MUSEUMS on campuses, though of more recent appearance than many of the large science museums, are represented already by a greater investment in the buildings put up for them: \$5,350,000 in 22 art museum buildings, against \$4,697,000



in 18 science museum buildings. However, there are only about 40 of what might be called outstanding museums for art, against 80 for science.

The administrative problem of the art museum is relatively simple—being solely the affair of the art department or school of fine arts. As noted, the museum may have begun as a teaching collection and little gallery, but if the museum has grown it has set its character upon the premises so surely that when a new art building is provided the whole building is a museum, with classrooms as architecturally subordinate features. Thus one finds in small institutions such buildings as the Theodore Lyman Wright Art Hall of Beloit College and the Mills College Art Gallery, and in large institutions such buildings as Yale's Gallery of Fine Arts and Harvard's Fogg Art Museum. In these places the student is in close contact with the art collection. It is a mistake to limit the museum function to the showing of temporary exhibitions or to isolate art collections in a gallery building removed from where art is taught. This arrangement has had to be made on some campuses—as at the University of California, pending the putting up of a building that will embrace teaching facilities within an art museum.

Forming a permanent collection of original works (a teaching collection of reproductions being taken for granted) is a task that must be extended over years. Princeton's Museum of Historic Art has a policy of specimen buying by which it has acquired a wide range of objects representing the arts through the ages. This has its advantages as a way to begin, but admittedly it is an economy plan and should give place to purchasing for quality when financial resources permit. Besides aiming to buy something fine for each of the great culture epochs, especially those in the line of descent of our own culture, it is desirable to specialize—as at the Smith College

Museum of Art, where emphasis is placed on the development of modern art.

Museum collections are important to art teaching under all of the different academic philosophies of aim and method. For courses in art practice, whether to make artists or to give laboratory experience, as well as for courses in art history and theory, there is need to have access to original works of the past. The scope of academic departments and graduate schools of art is ever being broadened, and this will bring still greater use of museum material since the role of collections develops along with the growth of teaching. Arthur Pope has suggested a realignment of college and university art schools for the turning out of broadly educated laymen and thoroughly prepared artists without separating the education of practitioner from that of patron. (*Art, Artist and Layman*, Harvard University Press, 1937.) Such an advance would lay still further demands upon museums beyond what they already bear from art work such as the rounded offering at Yale, the scientific leaning at Harvard, the archaeological emphasis at Princeton, the history development at New York University, Chicago, and Michigan, the laboratory courses at Wellesley, and the practical work at Iowa.

Research in art does not set up a division between museum and academic interests. Historical and archaeological studies require museum materials and, when carried on in the field, they add to museum collections. Technical studies, especially those concerned with methods for examining works of art to learn their nature and authenticity, are almost entirely a museum concern and have, in fact, extended from the Fogg Art Museum of Harvard into the newly established laboratories of several public museums. For a comprehensive report on academic research in art, there is a publication of the Carne-

gie Corporation of New York by Priscilla Hiss and Roberta Fansler (*Research in Fine Arts, in the Colleges and Universities of the United States*, 1934).

A university art museum should be responsible for a part in the daily life of the faculty and the student body. This informal function, only now beginning to be recognized, can be opened up through showing works of art at appropriate points on the campus. Yale's Gallery of Fine Arts has put sporting prints—including some of George Bellows' work—in the University Gymnasium, on loan. The University of Iowa has part of the art school's collection of paintings hung in a lounge of the student union. There is no reason why many objects received by gift but not needed for teaching in the art department should not be scattered around—even lent to students for their rooms. Lawrence College at Appleton, Wisconsin, has long had a collection especially for lending to faculty members and students; and recently several institutions—notably Vassar College, Teachers College of Columbia, Brown University, and Sweetbriar College—have taken sets of color prints prepared by Raymond and Raymond, art dealers of New York, solely for lending on the campus. Such extensions of art museum influence are likely to become so much a matter of course that architects, designing new college and university buildings, will make provision for hanging pictures and showing sculpture and other art objects in public and social rooms.

COMMUNITY SERVICE is not the business of a college or university museum; but circumstances often dictate some overstepping of this logic. In a small town the presence of a museum on the campus may forestall the founding of a public museum, and the people

may thus have a certain claim on the only museum there is. Also, the community's need may actually bring about, or help to bring about, the creation of a college museum. It happened so, clearly, in the case of a preparatory school at Andover, Massachusetts, where Phillips Academy's Addison Gallery appeared in recognition of public interest and has had to develop its teaching function by degrees. There is also something to be said on the score that a college is exempt from taxation and may owe the people what it can give in return. Yale's Peabody Museum of Natural History might explain its children's department in this way. However, public service at the expense of effective work with students would be wrong.

This does not reason against the cultivation of outside *support*; the Mills College Art Gallery does well to have its Friends of Far Eastern Art, and Vassar's Taylor Hall Art Gallery, its society of Friends. Such membership bodies draw upon the whole country—especially upon alumni of the institution, widely scattered—and are not like the local groups supporting public museums. Nor do these remarks apply to a public museum that happens to be affiliated with a university, as in the case of Rochester's Memorial Art Gallery and Pennsylvania's University Museum.

Sometimes the desire for public display on the campus (a desire that alumni have been known to conceive and that some of them may express forcibly through gifts) suggests the building of one imposing museum to bring together all collections, both of science and art, within the institution. This is a mistake; it separates all the interested departments from materials they need at hand. Besides, people are no longer impressed with such gestures, as they were in 1871 when excursion trains were run to Yale for the art exhibition, or even in 1914 when the

University of Iowa similarly publicised its then marvelous habitat group of Laysan Island birds. The day has passed when visitors will go to see the mastodon before calling on the college president.



## MONEY

### CHAPTER XI

MUSEUM INCOME is never adequate. The necessity for making it as large as possible rests upon every institution without mercy. Where there is only one source of funds—as with national, state, and municipal museums, and most school, college, and university museums—the money raising problem may or may not be as difficult as where there are several sources. But, however this may be, diversified income is more stable as a rule.

Public museums receive their support from sources which are classified as: gifts, taxes, income from endowment, and sales. The first three of these often bear a loose relationship to the age of the institution—most young museums relying chiefly upon gifts, whereas commonly tax support begins after it has been earned and endowment comes later still. At present gifts make up less than a fifth of the aggregate income of all public museums; taxes supply nearly a fourth; and endowment, less than half. This is approximately the composition of income in many individual cases.

There is no recognized standard by which to measure the income a museum needs in order to be effective. In the case of a public museum, the amount naturally must depend upon the size of the community served. The minimum annual income with which effective *library* work can be carried on is supposed to be one dollar per capita of the local population; and many libraries do better than that, although the average is about 70 cents per

capita. Museums have comparable needs, but the average of their incomes is much lower—as might be expected from the fact that a place served by one library may have three or more museums. However, the sum of *all* museum revenues in a community is also lower, on the average, than what the library counts upon receiving—which calls for attention. For the cities and towns that have a fairly complete set of museums, or one general museum, the average support is a little under 50 cents per capita, and the range is roughly from a nickel to a dollar. These figures are more significant than average figures for all cities and towns with one or more active museums. The rate of support, on that basis, is only about half what it is on the basis of only those places with fairly complete museum development.

The 50-cent rate may be taken as a rough guide for the present, except that for small places there is a limit below which support of *active* museums does not go. In a population of 10,000, an income of \$5,000 would be workable; but in a population of 1,000, obviously an income of \$500 would not be much good. There are museums—including many historical societies—with incomes even smaller than that, but they are in places large as well as small, and are inadequate unless they have the time of someone doing the job for the fun of it. Volunteer services do enable many little institutions, like the art museums of Carmel, Fort Dodge, Woodstock, Mystic, and Canton, to get along; but if there are paid services, museums such as those of Pacific Grove, Kalamazoo, Three Oaks, and Coshocton, each with \$2,500 or slightly more a year, are at the bottom limit of income.

In a recent statistical study (*The Museum and the Community*. Science Press, 1932, page 109), Paul Marshall Rea showed that the relation between museum moneys and local population, should not be thus stated

flatly as so much per capita. Large cities, he found, have a lower rate than smaller places; or, in Rea's words: "As population increases, expenditure for public service at museums in single centers tends to increase at a diminishing rate; and the ratio of expenditure to population tends to decrease, at first rapidly and subsequently more slowly." This, reduced to mathematical expression, gives a formula that students of museum problems can use in their calculations. But for ordinary purposes, such as making a case before a city council, the 50-cent rule of thumb with a bottom limit of perhaps \$2,500 is likely to be more useful. Further, this rule seems accurate enough to be consistent with an unordered world in which, at present, less than 50 communities can be taken as really indicative (although Rea counts more than 100 by including state capitals, college towns, and other exceptional places like those with an art museum only), and considering also that both good and bad records and irregularities of many other kinds lurk all through the list from hamlet to metropolis. Communities that can *surpass* the 50-cent rate may look to the shining examples of a few places that already do better—notably, Santa Barbara, Salem, Boston, Toledo, and New York with rates of from 60 to 90 cents per capita, and Worcester with more than a dollar. It is by dint of large endowments that most of these places stand so high, although New York's record is built on well balanced diversified income.

As to the shares of several museums of a community in the local total, there is a sort of blind order to be found—many places showing nearly the same apportionment as that of the grand total for all places that can be considered, namely, for art, more than half; for science, more than a third; and for history, what there is left. Industry is not usually represented.

The grand total of what all museums in the country receive, is of interest because its fluctuations from year to year give some idea of the rises and falls of museum fortune. In 1930 the approximate figure was \$16,000,000 (tables in Coleman's "Recent Progress and Condition of Museums." U. S. Office of Education, *Bulletin*, 1931, No. 20). In 1935 it stood near \$13,000,000, which was the resultant of a general reduction of about 20 per cent, offset a little by incomes of new museums. By 1938 the total had risen to more than \$18,000,000—a substantial advance over any earlier year. New museums shared largely in this recovery and new gain, but the older museums more than recouped their losses. Figures for 100 leading institutions show aggregate income to be three per cent higher now than in the peak of prosperity. Increased endowment and greatly developed popular support through dues and contributions are responsible; city support, that fell off 40 per cent, has only half recovered.

The general drop of 20 per cent from 1930 to 1935 showed a retarded effect of depression. By 1930 business had reacted to the market collapse of October 1929, but few museums suffered much before 1931, and some did not fall on hard times until 1932. (This was the experience, also, of libraries—their salary figures going on up to a peak in 1930). Similarly, institutions lagged behind the subsequent upward trend of business, so that 1935 represented about the lowest ebb of the museum financial tide. The fact that total income shows only a one-fifth reduction in the course of these five years, will perhaps surprise the museum people whose institutions suffered revenue cuts of 50, 60, 70, and even 80 per cent; but the calamity was not generally as severe as news of the time, with its panicky note, seemed to show. Withdrawal of city appropriations was the principal cause of trouble, although some large museums that had no city money

suffered severely too. Only a few small, unstable museums were wiped out.

Reactions to these difficulties were enlightening. At first there was outspoken distrust of city support, later tempered by realization that lack of *diversified* income was really the weakness of the hard hit city-supported museums. This change of feeling came after campaigns for members and contributors had raised money and brought indirect pressure upon city governments to reconsider. In Detroit, for example, the municipal Institute of Arts turned for part of its ordinary expense to its Founders Society, that previously had been concerned only with buying works of art; and the press remarked at first that "private resource will have to take the place of city funds on something like a permanent basis." But when the society made a drive for funds, the Mayor came forward with a statement about Athens and Detroit, and then the city restored to the budget an item for essential services of the museum. In the same way many other museums broadened the base of their support, and reached the year 1935 stronger, though perhaps momentarily poorer, than they had been before. Not least of the gains was a growth of interest in sound finance, economical management, and effective work. Demands upon museums, as upon libraries, were increased during the depression; and performance grew accordingly, even in places where buildings had to be closed for part of the time each week or some of the less productive services curtailed or discontinued.

Strange as it may seem, *increases* of income were made during the bad years by a score of museums. Some did this by actually driving up their city support, as at Green Bay, Oakland, and Pacific Grove; but this was rare. More museums either increased their endowments, as at Boston, Brooklyn, Portland in Oregon, and Santa Bar-



bara, or received substantial gifts, as at Pittsfield and Seattle. Emergency aid from the federal government did much to give museums relief, and it brought prosperity to the city museums in Rochester and Milwaukee which by 1935 were operating far above pre-depression level.

Experience of recent years has brought much questioning as to the future. Activity of the federal government in local affairs has set up both hopes and fears; and it seems to have allayed somewhat the earlier suspicion of local government. Private benefaction is seen, by those whose interest is fixed on great gifts, to be passing; but the chances for broadening its base are remarked by others who note the spread of cultural interests. Some say gloomily that endowments are doomed, but great capital funds are still sought, and found. And while these old reliances remain, in spite of nervous qualms, new schemes are suggested for making institutions pay part of their way. Here lies golden opportunity.

There is no uncertainty about the fact that financial questions fall back on community service. The day has passed when inactive or ineffective institutions can get by on their amusement value to a little coterie, or on the strength of blind public faith. The regime of the wealthy benefactor and the socialite is giving place to that of democratic support and professional management; and the inevitable consequence is that in future museums will have to lean more than in past on public appropriations and popular support—and they will have to earn them.

**G**IFTS—whether single contributions or recurrent dues of members—are the principal support of a majority of museums, including very many of the small museums and young museums in the society stage; and

they form part of the income of nearly all public museums. However, not many museums get a large amount from gifts—most of the wealthy museums deriving their principal income from some other source. Considering all public museums, gifts provided \$2,380,000 toward total income of \$14,000,000 in 1938.

The grouping of dues and contributions as a single class of revenue is consistent with the disappearance of the old class of "society museums." Givers are ranked as *members*, whether their gifts are large or small. Dues are now looked upon as contributions towards a work rather than as payments for special privileges, although the practice of electing members to different classes, or ranks, gives a sort of social quid pro quo.

The number of museum members has been increasing, with occasional setbacks, for a century and a half. By 1876 there may have been 50,000 in the ranks; the Eaton report found more than half that many in historical societies alone, without a score of these societies that the report overlooked and without scientific societies that it did not attempt to cover. Art museums were beginning to have members then; the Metropolitan Museum had opened its roll at ten dollars in 1873, and 600 people joined. During the present century memberships have been expanded hugely. By 1930 there were at least 250,000 people enrolled. The Art Institute of Chicago had the record with more than 19,000 members, and two other museums had more than 10,000 each. During the depression, perhaps half the museums of the country made no enlistment efforts. But others redoubled their appeals in order to bolster up shrinking budgets; and some increased their enrollments in consequence. On the whole, memberships were cut almost in half between 1930 and 1935 when solicitation was resumed.

Doubts are expressed, at times, as to whether it is good

business to develop ordinary memberships since they may cost almost as much to get as they yield unless kept up for several years. Most museums find the long-run proceeds well worth trying for, and also they stress the influences of members in making a friendly community. Some classes of membership, in fact, are not financial in purpose at all. Teaching memberships, with reduced dues, are part of the business of working with the schools, and junior memberships, with dues of only a few cents are designed to hold the interest of children.

The question of income from individuals or groups participating in educational activities is another matter, involving policy as well as revenue (Chapter XVIII).

Occasionally efforts are made to cultivate the support of industry through company memberships. This plan may offer something worth while for museums of industry, but for science and art museums it has shown itself to be awkward and subversive. Support even of industry museums by companies will call for greater influence than museums can yet claim; Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry has set itself the task of attracting at least 10,000 visitors a day as a prerequisite to industrial appeals. Business men rightly expect value for their money, and the best way to handle their support, if desired, is through payment for a specific service. The several art museums that have organized classes in decoration and design for department store employees should make the stores pay—as they do at Buffalo. The price should be at least the full cost. Institutions too often evade practical test of their work by claims to some undefinable merit. This is bad policy, and it weakens even general public service that should be viewed critically along with every other activity that costs money to carry on.

During recent years, the great educational foundations

have assisted museums through grants. The Carnegie Corporation of New York began in this field as early as 1913; and since 1925, when it first supported work of the American Association of Museums, it has given to an ever increasing number of museums—in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Washington, Cincinnati, Newark, Toledo, Denver, Worcester, New Haven, Cambridge, Savannah, Charleston, Davenport, Andover. The Rockefeller Foundation and the General Education Board have also given to the Association, and to museums in several large amounts including an unrestricted grant of \$2,000,000 to Chicago's Oriental Institute in 1936. The foundations that have been giving are clearly interested more in studies, experiments, and other undertakings that are helpful to many museums in improving their educational and administrative methods, or that lead to institutions of new and better type, than they are in balancing budgets for ordinary activities, putting up buildings, buying collections, or aiding in programs of research. Although a number of substantial grants have been made for elaborate work, there is leaning in some quarters toward small gifts for comparatively simple plans.

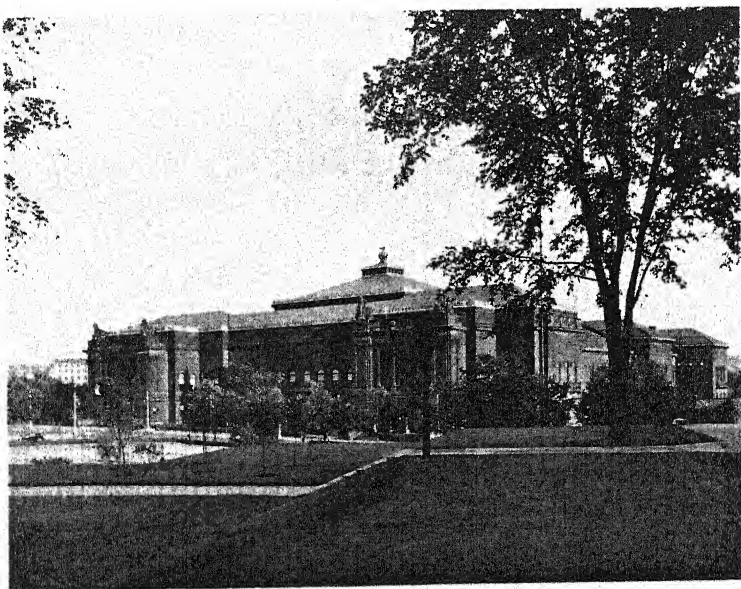
**T**AXES collected by cities form part of the income of 143 public museums and are the chief support of 113. Considering all public museums, this is the second largest class of income and it provided \$3,386,700 toward total income of \$14,000,000 in 1938.

City support—which was higher in 1930 and lower in 1935 than at present—seems headed now for considerable growth. The idea of public funds for elementary educa-

tion brought the first large increase of city support years ago when museums got school service under way, and the next large rise will come when adult education takes some satisfactory form. This is in keeping with the whole history of educational finance which records the extension of public support upward from the elementary level. A counter-current of thought in the case of adult education, suggesting that the cost be borne by those who participate, is doubtless right in respect to courses and other specific work for which one enrolls; but the point does not hold for more widely useful efforts of museums. The claim of general work on the public purse was early emphasized by the term *free* applied to public libraries and museums; but now we take this for granted—as Bostwick says for the libraries, in objecting to the term on the ground that one no longer speaks of “free streets” or “free light.” Protection and maintenance are the first claims of institutions on local government, but educational work for both young and old has strong and rightful appeal.

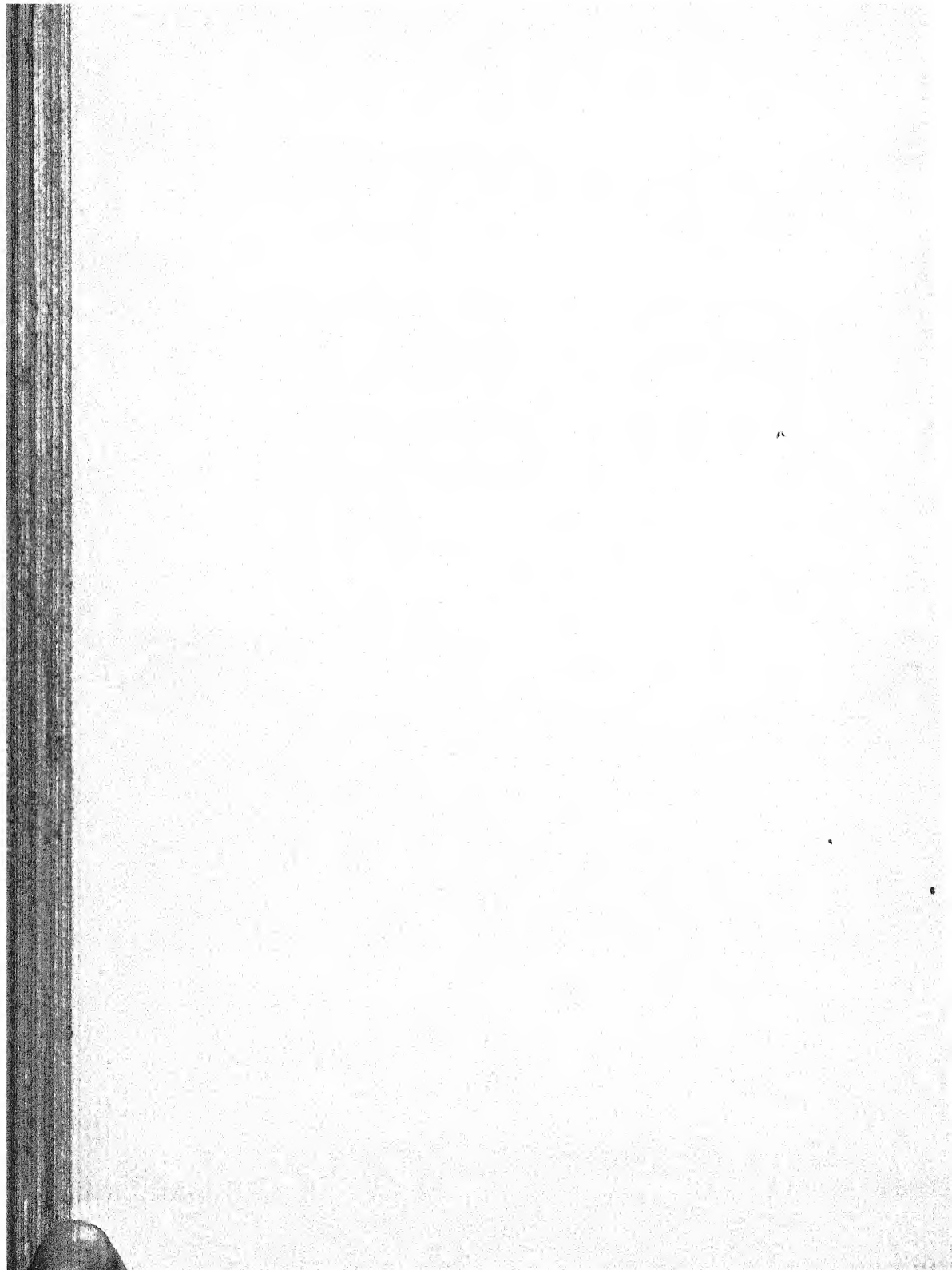
Fear of city support is sometimes encountered. This seems to grow out of misapprehensions—principally the idea that city support means *entire* city support, and that acceptance of public funds delivers *control* to politics. The struggles of municipally controlled museums, wholly supported by taxes, to keep their heads above successive political tides do indeed give evidence of the danger of dependence upon a city; but diversified income including city support—regularly or when it can be had—is advantageous for any independent museum. There is plain incongruity between statements like the following two from a Boston institution’s descriptive pamphlet: “the Museum occupies a unique position among the greater museums of the country, and perhaps of the world, in that it was created and has been supported to this day





CARNEGIE INSTITUTE

PITTSBURGH



solely by private citizens . . .” and then this: “The means do not yet exist with which to keep adequately in motion this great engine of culture. The Museum has not the money for the proper preservation, exhibition, and publication of its collections and their interpretation to the people.”

Since state law determines the purposes to which local public funds are allowed to be given, museums have this legal background of city support to consider. General state legislation is recognized as better than special enactments on behalf of particular institutions; and the outlines of a model law have been suggested. (There is a compilation of state laws, with critical comment, in Appendix D of Coleman's *Manual for Small Museums*.) Indiana secured the first permissive legislation in 1914; New York and Iowa followed in 1919; and several other states have taken action since. Ohio has an excellent law, passed in 1925. However, three-quarters of the states have as yet made little or no provision—Massachusetts conspicuous among them because she has so many museums to foster. In New England, state constitutions are often said to block the way (in spite of the obvious contradiction of this by library support); but in fact there seems to be no obstacle save the lack of a positive law—concerning which a legal opinion states that “there has been insufficient agitation in favor of (museum) legislation to result in any enactment.” It is the plain duty of museums, working together, to go into this situation in each state. Where legislation blocks city support in any way, the law should be changed; and where the legislature has failed to point the way by specifically giving local government the authority to support museums, then laws that do so provide should be secured.

In states that already have legal authority, there is need for extending its application by work on local au-

thorities, especially in small towns. Away from the centers of wealth there is acute need for public support, and the example of libraries in cultivating it for nearly a century—starting with the little town of Peterborough, New Hampshire—should be helpful.

The basis of tax support is probably not the same in any two places where there is a definite plan. This matter calls for attention. Most support is by appropriation from year to year under the city budget. But in some cities a specified share of the total tax collection goes to the museum; in St. Louis, and some little places including Fort Dodge, Iowa, and Pacific Grove, California, this is so. The rate at St. Louis is based on assessed valuation, two cents on each 100 dollars (or one-fifth mill per dollar) besides part of a smaller special license tax. Milwaukee used to give its general public museum a mill per dollar of assessed valuation, but now the common council appropriates as it chooses yearly through the budget. A specified rate is convenient if it is not too low; the budget plan, being flexible, means unremitting struggle. Any plan is better than none.

Be the method of apportioning taxes what it may, there is the important further matter of what museum functions the city is responsible for. Having provided a building and equipment (or even if relieved of this duty, as it has been in many places), the city should take care, firstly, of the cost of upkeep, cleaning, and guarding. Secondly, the city should support educational work, including school service and the general program for children and adults. Since education in a museum springs from exhibits, the cost of preparing and installing public exhibitions is part of the bill that the community should foot. The first two purposes are oftener supported than the third. These conclusions are the fruit of long experience on the part of museum trustees and city fathers. They carry

the condition that the museum corporation be responsible for securing gifts and perhaps endowment to support collecting, curatorial work, and research.

There is constant demand for statistical information on museum incomes, mostly for use in developing local support. The day has passed when the finances of public museums can properly be regarded as secret, although a few institutions still see fit to conceal their money transactions. Efforts of the American Association of Museums during the past dozen years to make the facts known through its publications have gone far towards breaking down secretiveness and giving museums information and precedent for improving their own conditions.

Analysis of statistics should bring out the relation between city support, population, and assessed valuation—assessments being a convenient basis for comparison since 80 per cent of general taxes in most cities is levied on real estate. Such calculations call attention to cases of poor support, and also to the exemplary fact that successful museum programs in some cities receive upwards of  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{3}$  mill per dollar of assessed valuation. (Libraries, as noted, may get several times as much as this under permissive state laws setting *top* limits up to four and five mills.) Comparison with population adds a safeguard by pointing out cities with low assessed valuation that should be guided by the need for a minimum of perhaps 25 cents per capita as the city's share in the diversified income of the local museums. For small places of less than say 5,000 population, such figures would have to give place to the minimum of museum subsistence.

The city, though by far the most generous political unit supporting local museums, is not alone in this role. Counties, states, and the nation enter also, in some degree.

*The county* is not as important as might be supposed from the number of so-called county museums and his-



torical societies—most of them named in this way, however, as an indication of scope and not of support or control. The only large county institution, in the strict sense, is the Los Angeles County Museum, receiving practically the whole of its income from the one source.

The promise, if any, of the county for the future is that of paying for extension services to rural schools. The museums of Charleston, San Diego, Hagerstown, and Coshocton receive contributions on this basis. Regardless of service, some 40 counties in eight states appropriate more or less regularly; Indiana heads the list with about a score of counties; Pennsylvania comes next with ten; California, New York, and Ohio have each a few. Most of this began in the 1920's.

*The state* has its own museum work to do through support of state museums, and its funds appear rarely in the incomes of other museums. Two institutions in Philadelphia seem to be alone, among public museums, in having substantial state appropriations. The duty of state museums in fostering the work of local museums is another matter (Chapter VII); and in time it may open up state subsidy—in spite of present wide disfavor of it—since the principle is well established that education is not entirely a local responsibility. However, as yet one hears no talk among museum people along lines of the running discussion among librarians as to whether state subsidy should underwrite basic library service for all, leaving to cities the support of such further advantages as the local populations need.

*The nation*, too, has its own museum responsibilities. Although grants of federal funds have gone to local museums during the 1930's under the nation's emergency program, most of these subventions were for capital outlay—building, repair, and restoration—or took the form of personal services available through relief.

**I**NCOME FROM ENDOWMENT supports 201 public museums in whole or in part, and constitutes the chief support in 129 cases. Considering all public museums, this source of income yields more than any other, and it provided \$6,287,500 toward total income of \$14,000,000 in 1938.

Large permanent funds are of fairly recent origin, although the history of museum endowments goes back to 1826 when James Smithson made his will that later brought \$550,000 to the United States. George Peabody's two museum endowments of \$30,000 for Yale and \$90,000 for Harvard, and William Corcoran's fund of something less than \$1,000,000 for the gallery in Washington were important developments; but the first vast benefaction was that of Jacob Rogers who unexpectedly left more than \$5,000,000 to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1901. Since then a succession of extraordinary gifts and bequests has been made—most notable among them, those of Edward Drummond Libby of Toledo, Frank A. Munsey of New York, William Rockhill Nelson of Kansas City, and Andrew W. Mellon whose gift was to the nation.

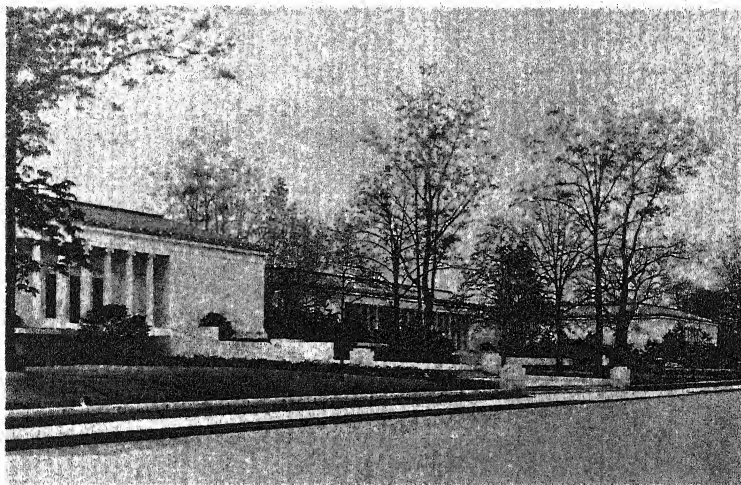
Although some of the leading benefactions are without restriction, there is on the whole too much tying down of permanent funds to the purchase of objects for collections. This purpose is important, but it fetches givers more forcefully than it should in the interest of museums. The freedom of some institutions to fall back for running expenses during recent years upon the incomes of funds devoted normally to purchasing for collections was instrumental in saving both museums and the museum profession from something like wreckage.

It would be advantageous if every public museum had enough unrestricted endowment to guarantee its basic budget in time of adversity; but it is not desirable, in the

long run, for any institution to live wholly on investments. As to how much museum endowment all told there should be in a city, one notes that librarians suggest one million dollars of *principal* for each 100,000 of population. (This principal would yield 50 cents per capita in normal times, or the entire amount that all the museums in the community would receive from all sources as things are going now.) In a few cities museums already surpass the library standard of endowment, but these places have art alone heavily endowed—New London, Worcester, Toledo, Kansas City. In some other places, including Salem, Pittsburgh, and Boston, the library standard is just met by a group of museums (though art has much the best of it in Boston too). But in most cities museums are below this level in their permanent funds. Perhaps a sound expectation at present would be one-half of what the libraries hold to be right. This is about where New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Cleveland, as well as little Pittsfield, Santa Barbara, and St. Johnsbury stand (lumping general and restricted endowments, which would be treated separately for more exact conclusions).

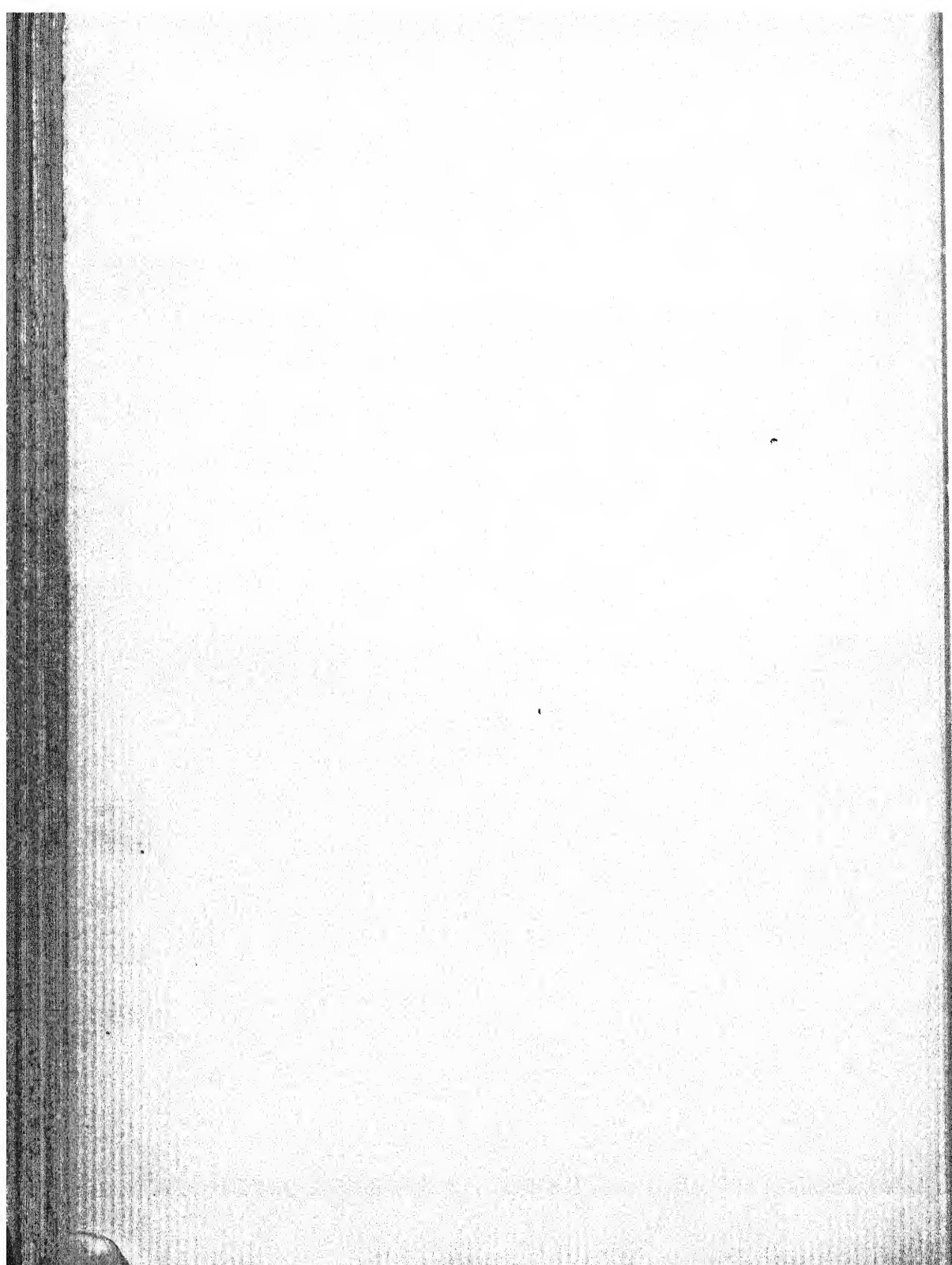
Many museums get gratis from their own trustees such guidance in the handling of funds as they could not possibly secure in any other way. Some museums must rely upon trust companies. But any institution with permanent funds may well consider the advantages of patronizing one of the community trusts—of which there are 76 in the country now. For museums unfamiliar with the rudiments of fund management there is a simple statement in print (*Manual for Small Museums*).

The occasional dissipation of a "permanent" fund by making expenditures from capital for operation purposes is most regrettable. Trustees should not need to be reminded of the rule, "Once endowment, always endowment."



TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART

TOLEDO





**S**ALES of publications and services produce some income for most museums. Although not usually important, this source gains steadily in its yield.

Sale of publications brings in a little to most museums, and a substantial though *relatively* small amount to a few of the great museums. The low pricing of issues intended for extensive use shows that recovery of cost, not profit, is sought; and the small distribution of most issues does its unhelpful part in making revolving publication funds spiral into the red. The time seems sure to come when museums will pool some of their printing, and imprint their own copies of the resulting publications for local sale. However, they are not up to this as yet.

Many museums sell a book or two that they themselves have not published. Some of the historic house museums do this—the House of Seven Gables at Salem selling Hawthorne's book, for example. Most active of all in this line are the American Museum and the Field Museum with their bookshops that keep up with what is published commercially on natural history, thus setting excellent examples that deserve to be followed by other museums—by each according to its size.

Admission fees—which are essentially sales of service—are rapidly taking on, as their most important function, the supporting of historic house museums. Among public museums there is a tendency to do away with admission charges, although many of the large institutions—especially the art museums—have pay days in every week. The New York Museum of Science and Industry, in Rockefeller Center, charging a quarter for admission every day, took in \$78,000 in 1938.

Besides the general admission fee there is now another collection—the *show admission*, it might well be called. Planetariums attached to museums were the first to charge for a performance—giving a sort of show within

a show. The coal mine in Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry is operated on the same plan, and it brings in more than one hundred thousand 25-cent payments a year. Art museums have opportunity to charge for special exhibitions, and some do—which practice may be encouraged by the charges now made commonly for non-museum art exhibitions. This class of income is also likely to be developed in connection with music, dance, and drama.

More and more (more often and more money) public museums are charging for special services to special groups. There is much to be said in favor of this practice which kindles the hope that a substantial part of museum work may become self-supporting and also worth the price. There is no illogic in a public institution selling direct services. Libraries have had to face this issue; and for them it is agreed that the ideal is free basic service with equal opportunity for all up to a point, and beyond that a charge for what you get.

**M**USEUM EXPENSE has had very little study except in regard to economy. If many incomes increase enough to provide more than is urgently needed, a philosophy of expenditure will appear. "Friends, *if* the sky fall, there will be catching of larks!"

Where the museum dollar *does* go—apart from the question of where it ought to go—is a matter greatly obscured by irregularities in museums accounting. Most art museums separate operating expense from capital outlay for collections, but science museums do not capitalize the cost of field and shop work because the resulting collections and exhibits have little market value. Therefore it is not possible to give, for museums generally,

anything comparable to the simple library formula of 50 cents on the expense dollar for salary, 25 cents for other operations and maintenance, and 25 cents for books. The larger art museums spend, on the average, about 50 cents of the museum dollar for purchase of objects—with wide variation from less than five to more than 60 cents. But the other figures would be hard to ascertain since few museums reveal their salary payments, and not many record other operations in a way to give figures that can be compared.

TREASURERS' REPORTS, appearing in the printed annual reports of many museums, show a motley assortment of financial methods. Some are crude cash statements. Others are brief and informal summaries. Many are fragmentary auditor's reports. A few are full presentations with balance sheet, statement of operating income and expenditure, and explanatory schedules of investments and special fund accounts. Not many—in fact not all of those in good form technically—give a satisfactory picture of the museum's financial position and its transactions of the year. Some of this incompleteness is admittedly deliberate, bearing witness to ideas about how much outsiders need to know. But much more of it is due to lack of experience in accounting. There seem to be treasurers as well as directors who have little skill in such matters. Another cause of trouble is the fact that ordinarily reports display the viewpoint of the auditor more than that of the executive. The auditor is concerned primarily with tracing all income into disbursements or balances as a test of correctness in accounting. The executive should be interested not only in this but also in what the money has been spent for, in

order to judge the wisdom and efficiency of what has been done. If there were a consensus of opinion among museum directors as to what their accounts should show, so that all might benefit from the experience of all, reports would doubtless begin to give figures that could be compared. There has long been need for a study of this subject and publication of acceptable recommendations.

Nearly a score of very important museums—more than half of them art museums—do not publish financial reports at all, apparently on the principle that what they do not care to make known is nobody else's business. Some carry this to the point of being unwilling to give out any financial information under any circumstances. This is surely short-sighted, and also wrong. "The fact that any organization is exempt from taxation should be sufficient evidence that its operations are affected with a public interest..." says a president's report to the Carnegie Corporation. A museum with an income so large that embarrassing interest might be taken in it cannot hope to cover up indefinitely; and the longer public curiosity and professional interest are held in suspense the less charitable they will be when gratified. On the other hand, says one director: "If statistics are withheld because they are so low the institution is ashamed of them, it might help to have them made known."

Secretiveness is an unmistakable sign of immaturity. Museums were once in the secret-methods state in all their work; but now they are almost wholly in the light.

## MUSEUM BUILDINGS

### CHAPTER XII

A LARGE INVESTMENT has been put into buildings for museums. The total cost of the structures now in use exceeds \$180,000,000 (Appendix W) and has mounted to this level by the pouring in of public and private funds for more than a century, and at the rate of \$5,000,000 or more in nearly every year since 1926—close to \$9,000,000 yearly on the average for a decade, and above \$17,000,000 in each of two recent years, with figures highest from 1926 to 1933, dropping off after that, but now climbing again.

The investment is not one of money alone. A great deal of thought also has gone into museum construction, and ideas have changed much with the passing of years. This is not always admitted. Critics have fallen into the way of saying that museums occupy Greek temples and Renaissance palaces, and that architects (hisses and boos) take no thought of functional requirements but design for worship and pomp. The truth is that architectural design has advanced quite as rapidly as museums themselves have been able to develop. When the earliest museums were built, there were no functional requirements in the modern sense, and even arrangements for exhibition had to be made in the absence of much to exhibit. As needs grew, the museum was changed from a box into a grouping of rooms, and after that, as different ideas of installation were taken up, the rooms were given special character and set in different relationships affecting the plan. Attendance made the routing of visitors a



problem that received various solutions, one of which evolved the room-and-hall unit of layout. Changing exhibitions made their own specific architectural demands, and developments like the period room and the habitat group brought further differentiation in parts of the building. The rise of museum work as a calling directed attention to work space, and brought forth an upper floor. The appearance of educational services then demanded room arrangements for teaching that quite remade the building at ground level. Meanwhile science museums had raised the question of space for study collections by dividing their material into two parts—for exhibition, and for research. This need they met fully, forcing the necessary changes upon architects, before art museums came upon it; now some art collections are divided, and space for reserve collections is likely to be set aside in buildings of the future. Thus form and function have traveled on together, though form has lagged more or less behind.

Inadequate new museum buildings owe their faults to various things—sometimes to being extensions of old buildings, sometimes to the conservatism of architects (even of an architect who has designed many museums), sometimes to the inability of museums to give the architect an enlightened program. But in many cases the building is built before the museum organization has been formed or has had time to define its needs—a most fruitful source of difficulties.

**A**RCHITECTURAL STYLES have brought many attacks upon museums—more, it appears, than are called for, even considering the harmful over-use of columns, domes, and steps. The earliest museum buildings

came in the classical revival and the forms of ancient monuments were laid upon them from the start. Many kinds of public buildings have been treated in the same way and the classical tradition has become so strong that it will not soon be thrown off. However, it is ridiculous to blame museum architects for what is a whole people's conservatism.

When Renaissance styles were turned to in the 1860's, the change was much more than a copying of Europe's accidental use of vacant palaces for museums. Palace designs, offering suites of rooms that opened one into another, were just what was needed for collections then beginning to be classified—a need further emphasized by Europe's adoption of period arrangement in the 'nineties. Besides, ornate interiors were in the best judgment of the wealthy amateurs who ran our early institutions. The formula filled the need so well that near-Renaissance palaces were built by the score; and after changing needs of museums had greatly modified the interiors palace facades continued to be used as a matter of habit.

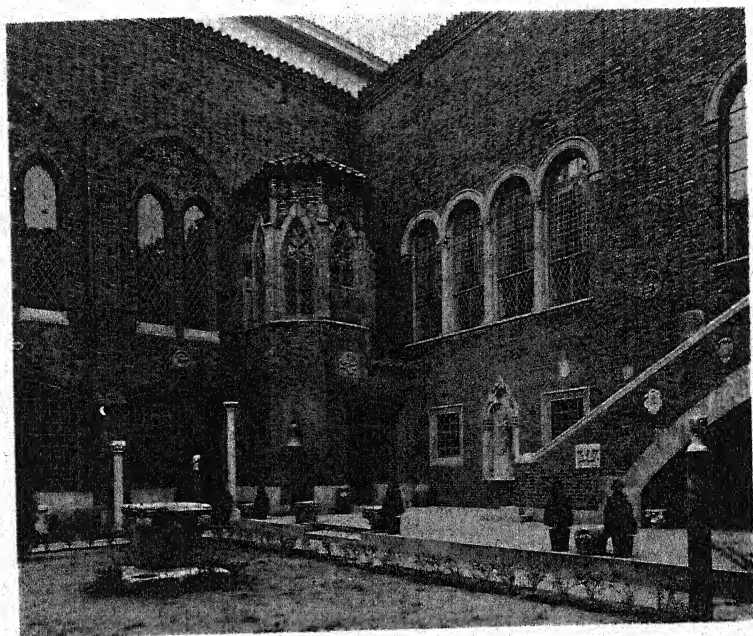
The "architectural interior" is now a thing of the past, despite occasional conspicuous thrown-backs. And facades, also, are yielding to the realization that a building should look like what, in structure and function, it is. So modern architecture—the style of simple masses and freely used materials—has taken hold upon museums as upon buildings of other kinds. However, modern style is not a sure sign of the last word in planning. France, set out to build a model museum in modern style for the Paris Exposition of 1937, but made most of the old blunders in new ways. Some of the "modern" architects have even devised new mistakes, not heretofore discovered.

Since the World War about twenty museum designs of modern character have been carried out. The first of importance (1927) was Gould's design for the Henry

Art Gallery of the University of Washington at Seattle, and one of the most recent (1936) is Meem's design for the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center of concrete and aluminum. Other examples are art museums in Seattle, Santa Barbara, Little Rock, Portland (Oregon), Boise, and New York City; and the Cranbrook Institute of Science, the Grand Rapids Public Museum, the Army Aeronautical Museum at Dayton, the Panhandle Plains Historical Society at Canyon, Texas, and the four new museums at Dallas. Several recent buildings carrying traces of traditional styles are really in the same modern spirit—notably Morris and O'Connor's Avery Memorial at Hartford, and Hunt's Newark Museum.

Meanwhile, the classical tradition has been broken also by the use of American colonial styles, Georgian in the East and Spanish in the West. Georgian history museum buildings have shown a tendency to follow style in plan as well as in facade because the requirements of history museums are not yet very well defined; but the half dozen recent Georgian art museum buildings—among them the Fogg Art Museum of Harvard by Coolidge, Shepley, Bulfinch and Abbott—have dealt freely with museum needs behind a colonial front. This latitude has been used to extreme in Derrick's Edison Institute at Dearborn, which is a vast expanse of one-story factory-like structure screened by a row of buildings in the manner of Independence Hall. No less than thirty Georgian museums, large or small, have been put up in the last two decades.

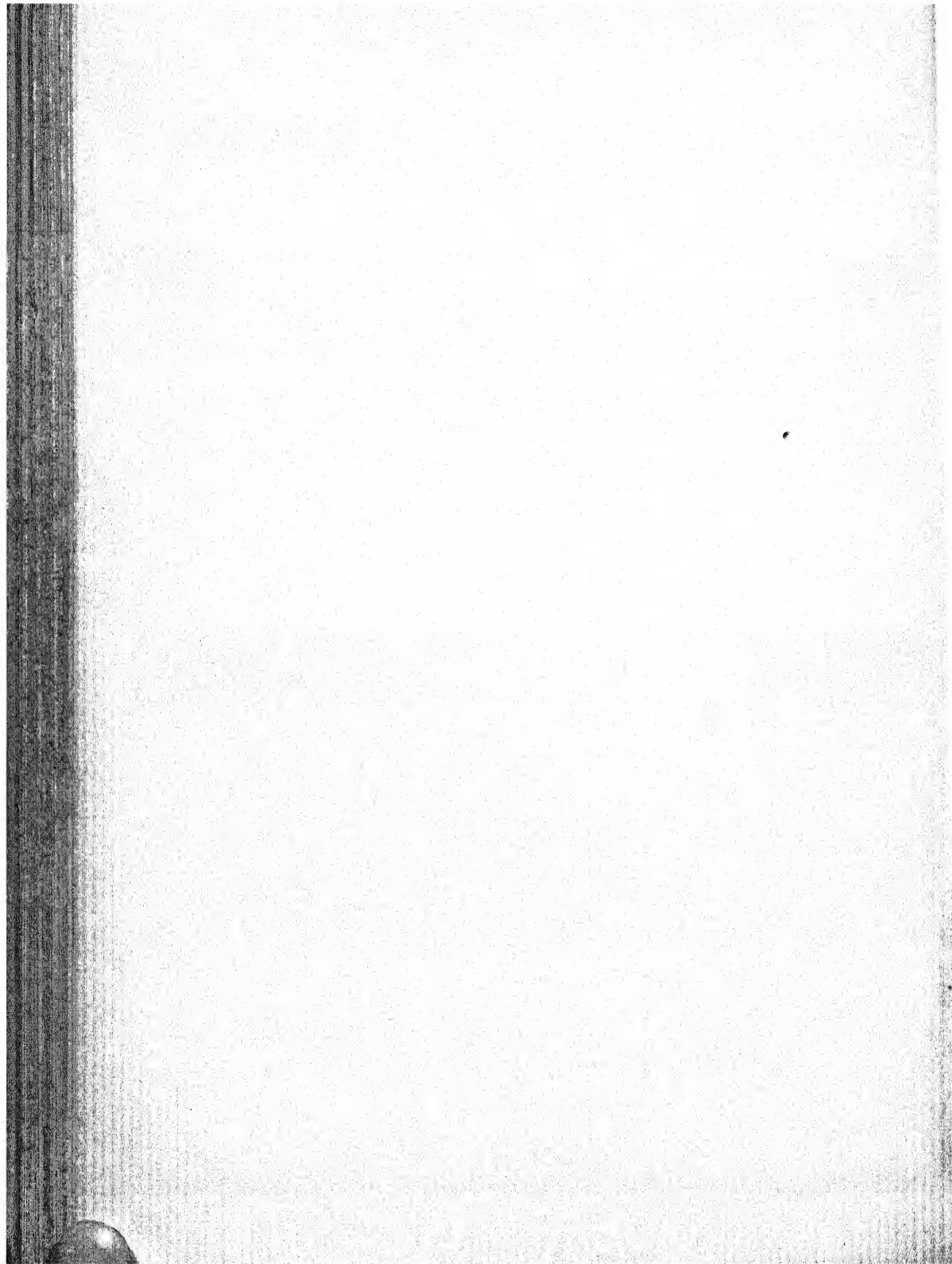
Of Spanish colonial designs there are only a few, including the excellent Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History planned without benefit of architect, and the little Junipero Serra Museum at San Diego. Also, there are several buildings of aboriginal flavor in the Southwest: Meem's Laboratory of Anthropology at Santa Fe in the



COURT, DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

DETROIT







local style born of adobe; and Stein's Wichita Art Institute, with a modern use of primitive motif. Now Tulane's Department of Middle American Research projects a museum in the form of a Mayan pyramid.

During the years since the World War, also, twenty-odd Renaissance and post-Renaissance designs—French, Italian, or Spanish—have been carried out. However, all but a few of these have been for institutions isolated from the main currents of museum work by their location or management. Apparently this style, for museums, is on its way out, although Platt could still follow it in 1923 for his well arranged Freer Gallery of Art in Washington.

Also in the last two decades, since the War, pseudo-classical designs have been carried out in two dozen other buildings, nearly all of importance. Columns, pediments, and other classical trappings have a strong hold upon public edifices, but the result for museums is not a regeneration of ancient monuments, as some say. Instead, the tendency is to put traditional icing on modern buildings—which may be disingenuous, but seldom is harmful to the plan. There is Crêt's classical Detroit Institute of Arts with side light and a well studied arrangement of rooms to provide for composite display. There is Esenwein and Johnson's Buffalo Museum of Science—a functional building of basilica type planned for an organization that knew exactly what it wanted. There is Trumbauer, Borie, and Zantziger's Philadelphia Museum of Art over which the architects, having nothing specific to go by, threw up their hands and made a shell for the later occupants to build within according to an enlightened scheme. There is Wight and Wight's Nelson Gallery of Art at Kansas City, with the room-and-corridor unit of exhibition; and Pope's Baltimore Museum of Art and the National Gallery of Art with a room-to-room

arrangement. Most of the recent pseudo-classical buildings are much less "architectural," much more functional, than buildings of the same kind put up before the War. Flights of steps, domes, and colonnades still appear; but the flights grow shorter, the domes rarer, and the colonnades less and less obtrusive—with occasional exceptions. Monumental arrangements now seldom invade the interior beyond the entrance hall, and even there they are yielding to arrangements that assist the use of this space for the proper purposes of an entrance hall. To this also there are exceptions—the latest, the National Gallery of Art. Where the entrance hall is primarily a memorial and only incidentally part of a museum building, as in New York's Roosevelt Memorial and Philadelphia's Franklin Memorial, museum interests suffer most of all.

The few recent Gothic museum buildings are all at universities—save for the medieval Cloisters, in New York, with Gothic elements. Yale has two clear examples; and museum buildings on some other campuses are lightly touched by the style. In general, college and university museums show as much variety of design as do public museums, and they include some very business-like buildings such as that of the University Museums at Ann Arbor.

Now comes a new development, unrelated to anything that has gone before. Small buildings of no traditional style, constructed of local materials—many of log and rock—have appeared in national, state, and a few local parks to the number of more than thirty. Maier's trailside museums of the 1920's were the earliest. These museums are destined, no doubt, to influence the design of small community museums which in future may take their inspiration from the freedom of field museums rather than from the pseudo-classical formula of big city buildings.

OLD BUILDINGS are a problem. Museums do not often vacate or demolish their plants but try instead to keep them up to the need by making additions. During the present century only five important public museum buildings have gone out of use: the Wadsworth Atheneum's castle from 1844, the Copley Square building of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts from 1876, the old Detroit Museum of Art from 1888, the Chicago Historical Society's building from 1896, and the Portland (Oregon) Art Association's building from 1905.

The patching and adding process is never more than partially successful. It discourages a break with the past, especially where one firm of architects presides over successive changes for many years. This was brought out clearly by recent differences between the Brooklyn Museum and the firm of McKim, Mead and White, when the planning of major alterations forced a choice between the original design and the institution's successful functioning. More often the very nature of the problem dictates uninspired makeshifts, whether at the hands of one architect as with Chicago's Art Institute, or of several as at Cincinnati.

Some museums have let bygones be bygones. The Wadsworth Atheneum built its Avery Memorial in spite of an older building, and the Rhode Island School of Design built the Radeke addition by Aldrich with the same disregard. This spirit should animate all growing institutions—up to the time when it becomes a general custom to start afresh, as Boston's Museum of Fine Arts did thirty years ago when it chose to have not only a new home but also a new location.

The list of buildings (Appendix Y) is already long, and it grows steadily as wings are built and as homes are put up for infant institutions. In the latter class of structures lies the most hope for progress.

THE PERFECT MUSEUM cannot be planned or built. Debate over existing buildings has called attention to much that is bad and has suggested what would be better; but also it has shown that many questions are matters of opinion. There is little chance of reconciling in one building the different views as to arrangement, lighting, and treatment of interiors. The problems are many, and solutions are already diverse enough to make museums interesting.

Experience has shown how hard it is to make even the advances that are surely desirable. In the early years of the century the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, carried on exhaustive studies that led to its published *Communications to the Trustees*, but some of its careful findings were never used (like the plan for small rooms); and other findings were used, only to fall before the encroachments of time (notably the division by floors into two types of exhibition, an arrangement that now hardly survives except in one department). Grim reality can do swift murder or, if need be, slow torture upon many a good idea. Were it not for such fate we might long since have had skyscraper museums with subject division by floors. Stein and Simonson have advocated the plan, and the Art Institute of Chicago has recently been considering it seriously.

Yet museum planning has gone far. Compared with some other common building types—say, the residence—museums have changed vastly in a century. The acceptable museum now must have fair space for administration, education, and research, as well as for exhibition. Movement of visitors must be simplified—which means that people must be given a reasonable chance to do easily whatever they have come for, whether it be to see one thing or everything. There must be good light of some kind. The building must have the right mechanical



equipment. Flexibility should not be overlooked. And architectural treatment should be in its place—which is not on exhibition and not where one must climb up it to get indoors. These seem to be the principal requirements; just how they are met must ever be in the province of the planner.

There is already a quantity of fragmentary literature—critical and descriptive—on museum architecture. Stein, Kimball, Crêt, Rogers, Kent, Bach, Youtz, Simonson, and others have put much in print, since the older work of Gilman. Still more needs to be written, digesting what is known for the guidance of museum boards and architects. To this end a museum building code, similar perhaps to one drafted by Youtz (*The Museum News*, December 1, 1937) would be helpful in giving a simple statement as to site, materials, construction, and general arrangement and such particulars as nearly all can agree upon.

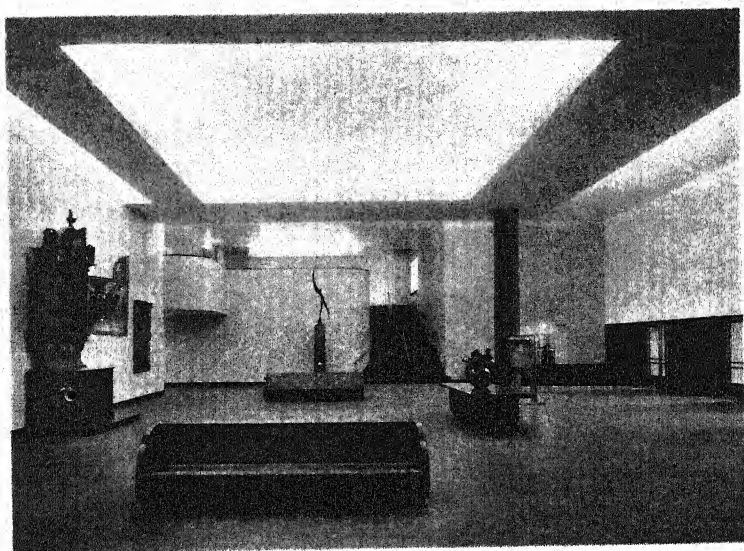
It is unfortunate that most writers have concerned themselves entirely with *art* museum buildings, and that science and history museums have not had much attention. This would be natural if the investment in buildings other than those for art were small, but such is not the case. During the past ten years, history has captured an investment of \$12,900,000, and science an investment of \$15,900,000—a total of nearly \$29,000,000, against \$33,000,000 for art. Sometimes the science museum's purposes are thought to make no demands worth considering. A contributor to Boston's *Communications* even suggested that antiquated art museum buildings be handed over to science museums, for which, he had a notion, any old thing would do. In fact, science and history museums offer many problems, some partly solved and some still wanting solution. Museum people and architects should give *all* buildings serious study.



**L**IGHT makes a great deal of trouble. It is the element that most shapes buildings and yet is least mastered by museum planners.

In the competition between natural and artificial light, artificial light is slowly but surely winning. Cheap electric power—a certainty for the future—will have a part in this outcome. Improvement in the quality of artificial light—already far advanced and sure to be carried much farther—will also have a part. Each year it is less true that works of art cannot be judged in artificial light, and also more obvious that neither can they be judged in the poor natural light provided commonly. Artificial light has the disapproval of some because it seems to be a device of the “have-not’s” to make inferior things seem good; but this offers the best of reasons why the “have’s” should use it also, to make what they have look better. Many of them do. When museums face the fact that adult education will mean long and regular evening hours, the question of lighting exhibits will be virtually closed.

Evolution of the functional building also favors this. The many advantages of having public display space on the first floor and of lighting part of it from above has tended to make natural-lighted art museums only a story and a half high—with administrative, curatorial, and educational space below. But as the downstairs activities grow, curatorial work calls for a floor of its own, and since the public has a greater claim on the main floor because of its convenience, curatorial work will doubtless take to the top of the house, closing off skylights and forcing full time use of artificial light for exhibition. The present ponderous skylight can then give place generally to simple lighting equipment such as many museums are already using. Science museums have long since arrived at a similar solution—made easy for them



ENTRANCE HALL, BROOKLYN MUSEUM

NEW YORK



by the fact that no skylight tradition blocked the way and that bad artificial light of the past was not as bad for their displays as for art. They use indirect light in combination with interior lighting of individual cases (or an approach to this with *semi*-indirect light).

The merits and disadvantages of the skylight are well known. There is no equally good arrangement for getting natural top light. Efforts to improve upon the skylight have brought overhead devices like the monitor, the lantern, and Seager's provisions for "top side light," but these do not seem likely to come into general use. On the other hand the skylight is costly, inefficient, useful only part of the time, and very limiting to the plan of the building. It is sure to pass when artificial top light (which has to be used with a skylight anyway) is fully accepted for the daylight hours. The common defense of the skylight by dragging in praise of natural *side* light is entirely off the point.

Side light, ever a necessity for work rooms, is needed also for some exhibits. At Detroit, side light—natural by day, artificial by night—is adopted almost throughout, and at Philadelphia the system is used for peripheral rooms. This calls for a double wall, and some have urged a band of glass in the outer wall to give flexibility within. The new five-story building of the Museum of Modern Art in New York has large upright expanses of glass instead of ordinary windows. However, windows are still the rule where side light is desired—free for the taking by day.

High windows, which in museums are mostly owing to Boston's early experiments and the writings of Gilman, have long been aided by artificial light, but now they are becoming incidental to it. The dark wall, in a room so

lighted from one side, was what forced the change. In the naves of buildings of basilica type—whether used as sculpture courts or tapestry courts, or not used at all—clerestory windows continue to look down mildly; but some of these naves seem at the point of having a new use, as we shall see, and then they will have to be lighted. Meanwhile the windows become less and less important, and artificial light at lower level becomes more and more important.

EXHIBITION ROOMS, according to some, should give a neutral setting for exhibits without decorative effects of any kind. According to others a gallery should have richness of its own in keeping with what it contains. Much of this difference of view comes from thinking in general terms. The large art museums with spaces more or less permanently assigned to different periods and different parts of the world, are in a class by themselves, and have reason for some special treatment—though not for any *faking* in period styles. The solution for these museums lies in a double arrangement providing formal galleries, without period interiors but with simple congenial treatment, and in addition authentic period rooms. But the institutions this concerns are not many. Most art museums are subject to frequent changes in every part, and their budgets permit of few changes of interior. The only workable thing for them is a neutral scheme of treatment. Wide use has made this plan practically standard among the smaller museums and has recommended it to some large museums as well.

But now comes a new influence from some of the big city museums. This is the plan of making frequent total changes—redesigning rooms, cases, and everything else



for each new installation. To carry it out means a lot of trouble and money, but museums feel competition from other attractions in cities and they are taking more trouble and finding more money than they used to.

Only art museums have as yet made any approach to a specific layout for exhibition floors. Science museums are still in the large hall phase—the hall repeated right and left, or in parallel behind a facade, or in series, as required. History museums have scarcely passed beyond what might be called residence and town hall plans. There are exceptions—notably the Buffalo Museum of Science's basilica and the Chicago Historical Society's building planned like an art museum; but in general only the art museums show much studied arrangement. For them, the exhibition floor usually shows some variant of a single common arrangement. It has a central space surrounded by a file of rooms, sometimes with a passage circumscribing the space so that each room can be reached without passing through another. The space may be open to the sky as in the Freer Gallery, or closed over as in the Columbus Gallery; the rooms may be broken into a double file, complete or incomplete. Larger museums repeat the unit, right and left, or irregularly. Small museums may have only a file or a group of rooms. Very small museums may have only a single space. Some museums, large and small, have anomalous arrangements; but clearly established is the idea of a space, or nave, with a passage around, and an outer file of rooms. This plan is more than a hundred years old. Originated by von Klenze for Munich in 1826, adopted by Chicago in 1893 and by Boston in 1909, and emphasized by the writings of Gilman, it is yet to be improved upon in the search for a functional arrangement. There is now a tendency to abandon clerestory lighting of the nave and to give it artificial light and a lower ceiling.

Routing of the kind that gives the visitor one course through and no escape has never had vogue in this country. It was a device of systematic old-time Germany. Good routing, which is providing direct access to all parts and of making it hard to get lost, has been our ideal. But just when the problem seemed to be disappearing, a group of psychologists under Robinson at Yale showed that for the ordinary visitor left walls are of small display value and that exits are attractive as well as exhibits (Arthur W. Melton. *Problems of Installation in Museums of Art*. American Association of Museums, 1935). The logical result—though, oddly, no one has suggested it—would be for museums to try giving their casual visitors all right walls to look at, and a clear course through the exhibits and out. This would leave left walls, and spaces reached through them, for people less on the fly. Since unhurried people like to sit down, the openings in left walls might lead to a central reading room. There is more to be said of this in another connection; suffice it here to note that the planner's thinking may have to follow new lines.

The importance of flexibility is ever being stressed. Within a room or a wing, flexibility is secured by relegating pipes, ducts, radiators, and the like to the outside walls, and by building partitions so they can be knocked down. We have noted the proposal that limitations imposed by the regularity of windows be done away with through use of a horizontal band of glass behind which openings could be disposed and redispersed at will. However, a building with no windows would have a still simpler solution of this problem through changes in lighting equipment.

Expansion, which comes to every healthy museum, would be easy if there were natural flexibility, but actually it is hard because museums have not seen that in the nature of things it is curatorial space that should

be allowed to go on extending slowly, and exhibition space that should be kept from extending fast. The custom has been rather to treat exhibit space as highly inflated storage and, when crowding quickly prompts, to add a new wing—a new makeshift like the rest. The museum that can expand its live storage on any rational plan is still a thing of the future, but such a museum will have to come in time, surprising everyone with its obvious good sense. The endless enlargement of exhibits must come to a halt, and this it will do when museums act fully on their own assertion that exhibits should be selected. The science museums learned this in the 1800's but partly forgot it when large habitat groups became their principal exhibits. The art and history museums have it still to act upon.

**M**ECHANICAL PLANT for heating and lighting a building is not often neglected, but air conditioning equipment needs to have more attention. Many museums ventilate with washed air, but only a few—including the art museums of Chicago and Toledo—attempt humidification also.

The comfort of people depends mostly upon temperature, as New York State's Commission on Ventilation discovered years ago, but the life of museum collections depends upon a combination of conditions that affect some objects in one way, some in another. There is urgent need of investigation into desirable standards of air conditioning. When optimum conditions are known they should be provided, in air conditioned storages and as far as possible in exhibition rooms, for whatever museum possessions are valued as parts of a permanent heritage.

CURATORIAL SPACE is the space where collections are kept and studied; it includes live storage together with room for the use of the material by curators and other students. A museum that keeps in dead storage whatever is not on exhibition is a crippled institution. In most science museums generous space is provided for study collections, and the collections are well organized for use. In few history museums has any attempt been made to organize study collections. In art museums, as a rule, only the collections of prints, perhaps also of textiles, have proper quarters—and this is only because they are not demanding of space. Art museum buildings generally do not recognize the function of caring for study collections, and so basement space and almost any other room that can be found is impressed into use. This will be overcome when art museums make a better arrangement of collections (Chapter XIV).

Besides space for the care of collections, there should be provision for their use. Curators have offices, however inadequate, and efforts have been made, as at Detroit, for locating department offices and laboratories near the related exhibitions. This is advantageous in one way, but it has the evil effect of sticking curators into separate corners where they can entrench themselves and defy their colleagues. Besides facilities for the staff there should be desks or cubicles for visiting students. Such provisions seem hard to make; but Henry W. Kent has suggested that, instead of scattered rooms for students, a large museum should have a single reference room to which material could be brought just as books are brought from library stacks to a reading room. (*The Museum News*, June 1, 1935)

There has been a period of freely expanding exhibits. The next change is likely to be a contraction of exhibits and an expansion of facilities for the student.



**E**DUCATIONAL SPACE of some kind is provided in nearly every museum. Its commonest and oldest form is the auditorium—grown to splendid proportions in some of the recent buildings, notably the Toledo Museum of Art. Music, stimulated by patronage of the federal government in the last few years, has given new usefulness to what in past was only the museum's lecture hall; and now there are plans for music centers in connection with many museums.

However, small rooms are much more important than large assembly places for the growth of educational work. No community museum plan is adequate that does not provide for meetings of special groups and school classes. A large museum may have a suite of rooms, a small museum only one classroom. The share of space given over to this use increases steadily.

Kindred in purpose are the accommodations for lending collections. Files of lantern slides and pictures may be associated with the library, especially in an art museum, but if lending service is active then routine work with schools splits off from reference work and gravitates to a part of the building where classes and teachers can regularly come and go.

The best location for educational space is on the ground floor—below the exhibition level, which may be a few steps up from grade (*very* few steps up, experience says). The ground floor in many museums is partly taken up by things that have no ultimate need to be there—tag ends of exhibits, curatorial space, library. Exhibits have their own floor above. Curatorial space is on its way to floors above the exhibits. The library, with a brilliant new role ahead, is migrating to the exhibition floor as we shall see. This leaves educational work on the ground floor where only the shops and work rooms, and perhaps offices, need remain to compete for space.



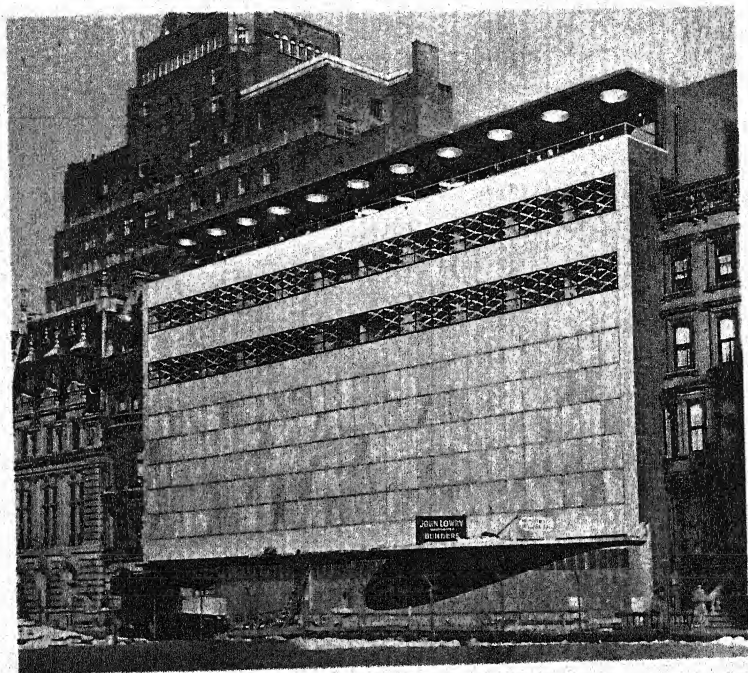
**A**DMINISTRATIVE SPACE—including service rooms—is not to be confused with curatorial space, even though both administrative and curatorial tasks are laid upon the same people in small institutions. In a large museum, administration calls for separate offices and work rooms, and these should be placed where they can be reached without going through exhibits.

Service space is rooted to the ground because it relates to the work of the receiving room. In this category are the rooms of the registrar, photographer, and preparator, besides shops and locker rooms. Clarence Stein has analyzed the requirements for this purpose ("Planning for Art Museum Services," *The Museum News*, January 1, 1939).

Offices have some freedom as to their whereabouts, but in a small building they are best kept near to other work places. In a large building, with curatorial space above the exhibition floor and service space below, there is quite as much reason for putting offices upstairs as down. A good arrangement might be for them to flank the entrance on the main floor and thus be half way between the work rooms and the study collections.

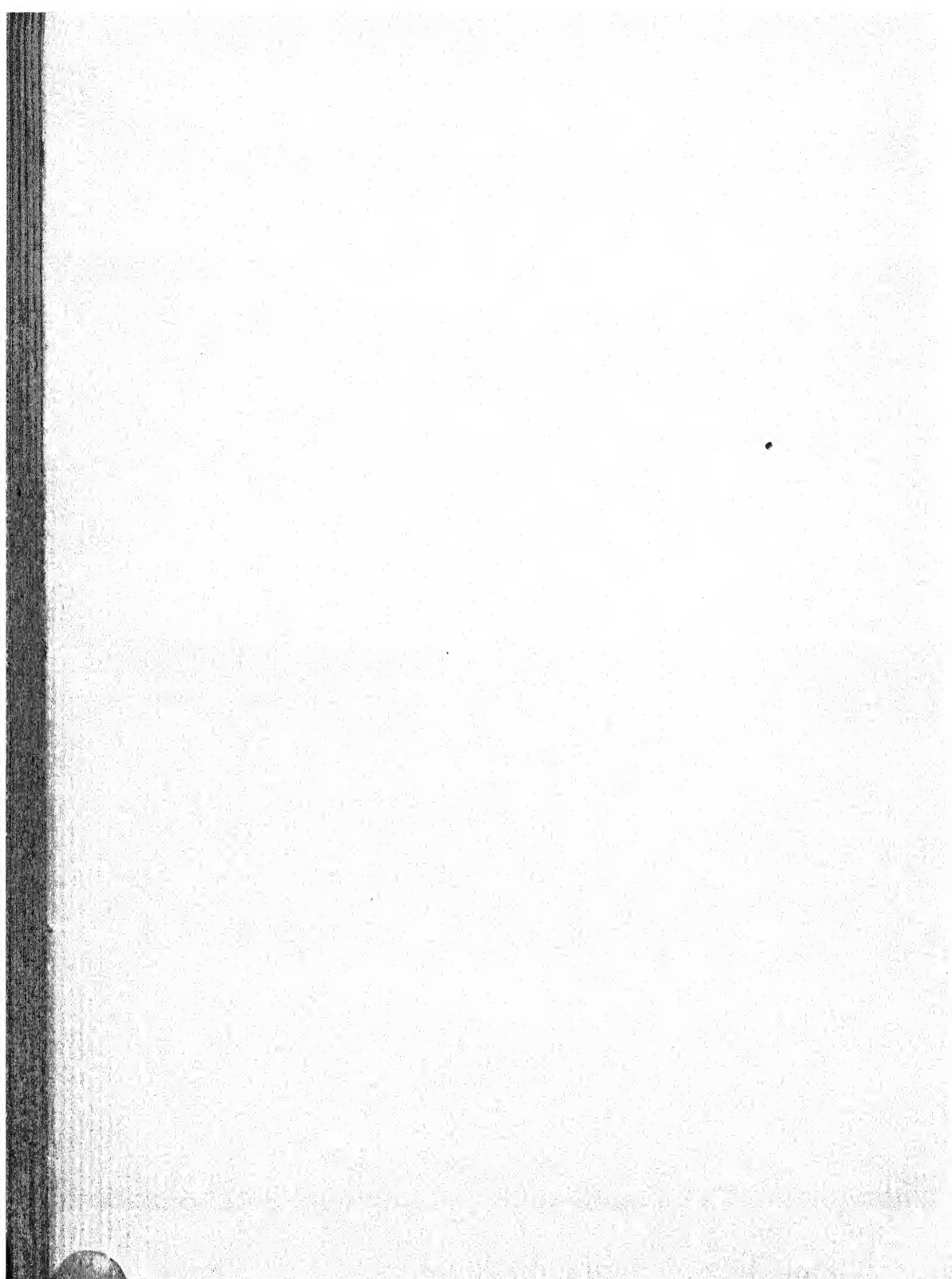
Finally, it may not be amiss to say a word for the value of pleasant work surroundings. A librarian has pointed out that some people, including some trustees, think that workers should not be made too comfortable. Not everyone shares this view.

**T**HE FUTURE OF PLANNING is likely to be shaped in part by turns of circumstance not thought out in our logical discussions. This is ever the way of development, which proceeds in orderly fashion until nature takes some unexpected leap.



*Photo by B. Newhall*  
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW YORK



One such leap is already foreshadowed in museums. It has to do with the central court, or the nave, around which rooms are disposed in a structure of basilica type. This high ceilinged room, usually with clerestory light, used to serve well for display of casts and architectural fragments, and it has since become the tapestry court or the garden court in many buildings. Now that decorative and monumental features are frowned upon, this court threatens to become a mere architectural vestige, more and more awkward to the curator, but not to be dispensed with by the architect because it chiefly supports the architectural character of the building. However, this increasingly useless space is being discovered by people who have not previously had an interest in it. Instructors, and others who are responsible for interpretation of exhibits, have begun to think of this best space in the house as a sort of educational living room—a place for orientation, for giving information, for reading.

Many people feel the need of a larger role for the museum's reference library, and now it is this department that promises to take possession of the central space. This does not mean that book stacks are likely to rise in what was the tapestry court, for stacks can be placed below deck; but it does mean that the librarian, in the new setting, may partly assume the role of general guide. The reading room in a central position would be a place of inquiry and study from which visitors could step into surrounding rooms to examine exhibits. Special leaflets would doubtless be provided for this very use, with references to objects on display, and perhaps to portfolios of pictures and even to trays of small objects that could be kept in the reference room for examination. It is safe to guess that chairs and tables, in this kind of a room, would not have the ordered formality of those in a public library's reading room, but would suggest, rather, a



study or lounge. Rugs might contribute to this effect. In such surroundings the serious visitor would have opportunity to establish *habitual* relations with the museum in his own way—a result that present arrangements tend to discourage. While the serious visitor is kept mostly to the center, in this plan, the casual visitor would make the circuit of outside rooms, where he could look at right walls only and be gone.

Although ordinarily a museum would have but one orientation room, it is conceivable that a large museum might have each department in a separate wing with a central room of its own. This would bring about still further modification of present functions, since it would scatter the library and invite a consolidation of the interests of librarians and instructors. Guide lecturers, taking groups around the outside file of rooms, would later bring some of their people to the reference place. Instructors would naturally make their headquarters at desks in the orientation room, where they would be able to assist inquirers. For most public relations, librarian and docent would come close together.

The beginnings of some such developments are to be seen. Several museums, notably art museums at Brooklyn and Buffalo, have lately reinstalled their libraries in accessible rooms that are more attractive than galleries. There is a tendency to put the reading room in a key position, as seen at Hartford and Fitchburg. The Berkshire Museum at Pittsfield has converted what was an open central well into a new orientation room with the appearance of a lounge (*The Museum News*. November 15, 1938). Other institutions, including Philadelphia's University Museum, have a like arrangement in prospect. But the most indicative changes are of a more general nature. Guards are regarded dubiously and are being replaced by instructors in exhibition halls, as at Omaha;



there is a growing conviction that the interested visitor must be separated from the main stream of visitors; there is increasing uneasiness over the fact that museums have to reckon with standing—and therefore restless and inattentive—visitors, instead of people sitting down. And there is the discovery about right and left walls. The needed adjustments would be aided by having casual visitors take the outside route, and by saving the inner space for visitors who will take time and trouble.

Before many years there is sure to be still another influence upon planning—that of the branch, or neighborhood, museum. When this type appears, it will have to meet entirely new requirements, since the little building will house not a whole organization but only part of a museum. It must accommodate a staff detachment that will not attempt administrative and research work, but will give itself wholly to public relations. This change will take from the main museum building some of the functions that have been shaping it in past, and it may bring about an architectural revolution of its own.

The same development would have a bearing on the matter of site and location. The idea that a museum, in order to be accessible, should be in the center of town is all right for small places. But in a big city no location can be convenient for all the people; and consequently museums have clung to the practice of building in parks, away from congested districts where fire hazards are great and dirt is too plentiful. The main museum building will have a better right than ever to stand where there is safety when branches become a reality, and the intimate sites are naturally chosen for them.

Then will come the day of museum show windows like those of stores. There has long been talk about this, but only the Grand Rapids Public Museum (like Baltimore's public library) has adopted the plan. Branch

museums in congested districts, up to the building line, can have display windows as naturally as stores. Now, windows would be unnatural in most museums—looking out upon lawns.

Thus the future has promise of upheavals in designing; and these upheavals will be the products of growth, increasing activity, and an urge to greater effectiveness in the museums themselves. Planning has already come far, and now the beginnings of a greater progress are clearly in sight. It is untrue that museum buildings run the gamut only of influences like the Mock Turtle's four branches of arithmetic—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision. As in any development, there are often backward steps, and sidesteps oftener still. But the main body of action is going strongly forward. New buildings that count are appearing every year. They are shaped by living needs.



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